

# THE SHAKERITE

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**POINT,  
CLICK,**



ILLUSTRATION BY PETER O'NEILL



# Ferguson Protests Ignite in Streets and on Twitter

Students debated the grand jury's decision on Twitter, and not kindly

As Twitter continues to grow in popularity, appealing to swaths of Internet users, millions of fingers mold it to a new use: heated debate.

Twitter isn't the same tool of news propagation it once was. Now it's an open forum for debate. Once used to communicate and fuel the Arab Spring's revolution, it's descended to a level suitable only for cryptic, inflammatory quips. But it doesn't have to be that way.



Marcia Brown  
Editor in Chief

At Shaker, the animosity online at the announcement of no indictment for Darren Wilson mirrored the dissonant anger across the nation. Twitter wars ensued with vigor between seniors and juniors sharing opinions and analyses, and sophomores and freshmen adding to the ruckus.

Wilson, a white police officer in Ferguson, MO, fatally shot Michael Brown, 18. Protests erupted and continued in Ferguson since Aug. 9.

Original comments ranged from "... there is a way to get away with murder if you wear the right clothes," to disparaging someone who disagrees with you, to "turn on the television and see what's going on in St. Louis, then say it's not a big deal."

A Twitter user, not a Shaker student, tweeted, "I don't feel sorry for black people.



Wesley Lowery

@WesleyLowery

A thug. Gotcha RT

@ben\_woods15: @WesleyLowery

You're just a thug trying to stir things up and agitate people

11/25/14, 21:42

Wesley Lowery ('08), former editor in chief of The Shakerite, sometimes responds to critical tweets. Now a reporter for The Washington Post, Lowery covered the Ferguson protests. He tweeted news and live action of the demonstrations. Other Twitter users then insulted his character. One even posted his parents' address.

WILL MCKNIGHT/THE SHAKERITE

If you hate us so much GO BACH [sic] TO AFRICA. we should have never bought you." A Shaker student screenshotted it, tweeting, "This pisses me off so much."

Another student facetiously questioned his race to disqualify his own view, tweeting "what if I say that racism is fixed in america. I'm white. Is that a valid opinion."

One student blamed media for the rise of national racial tensions tweeting, "it's been blown out of proportion from the beginning w the media feeding racial tensions when similar crimes happen everyday."

A Shaker student retorted, "can you say that it's an overreaction! Said by white teenagers living in Shaker Heights!"

Senior Noah Wheeler, noting the escalating tensions among students on Twitter, proposed a Student Group on Race Relations meeting. His invitation read, "Just a reminder: any student, sgorr or not, is invited to my SGORR groups Ferguson decisions tonight. Come for a safe, open discussion." Wesley Lowery even responded, fondly recalling his time in SGORR.

Lowery ('08), former Shakerite editor in chief, now a Washington Post Reporter covering the Ferguson protests and grand jury activities, has been targeted on Twitter. Users accused Lowery of being an activist, not a reporter, and even posted his parents' Shaker address. They assaulted his character and questioned his race -- two argumentation tools that are inappropriate, unsound and intrinsically hateful.

Once used to communicate and fuel the Arab Spring's revolution, Twitter's descended to a level suitable only for cryptic, inflammatory quips. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Editor's  
Note

Lowery's tweets included photos and video of the protests, updates on the progress of the investigation and some opinions. His Twitter bio reads "seek truth :: give voice to the voiceless :: shine light in the darkness," alluding to a statement President Barack Obama made on the first International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists. To me, that seems like a quote any journalist worth his weight in reporting would agree with.

The parable holds, "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all." This goes for Lowery's Twitter trolls, too. While you ought not to censor yourself, if you publish someone's personal information and castigate their character with weighty insults, I make an exception. If you're on Twitter, flinging unfounded insults at credible journalists, reconsider your words. Most journalists aim to share information not accessible by the public otherwise. Even with journalism's changing nature, from print to web, its essence -- its core value of reporting facts -- is the same, and it doesn't deserve such insults.

Twitter as a tool for reporters is immensely helpful -- it's instant. Yet, its abuse endangers journalists. As an open forum for debate, Twitter isn't ideal. It's essential that Twitter be used responsibly, whether by bystanders or participants in the upheaval. Racial tensions, police brutality and historical protests cannot be adequately addressed in 140 characters.

## Want to join The Shakerite?

Of course you do! Not sure? Here are some perks:

- ask the tough questions and get the answers
- see your name in an award-winning news source
- take trips to big cities

Tell your counselor you want to take Journalism I.

# SHA

Shaker Heights Teachers' Association

Professionals Dedicated to Excellence





PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MAGGIE SMITH/THE SHAKERITE

Due to new state requirements in reading and math, kindergarten students will trade crayons for more mandated standardized tests during the year.

# Kindergarteners' New Activity: Exams

State testing extends beyond the high school as the youngest students face more exams

YASMINE KAYALI STAFF REPORTER  
GRACE LOUGHEED STAFF REPORTER

Lomond Elementary School kindergarten teacher Karen Smith has a lot to think about these days.

"I have witnessed firsthand Shaker always trying to do what is best for our students. Now it seems like we just keep getting more to test on, and it is literally squishing our time to teach," she said.

Her students also have a lot on their minds, now that state laws have given standardized tests a prominent role in Ohio's kindergarten classrooms.

Kindergarteners this year must take three different standardized tests: the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, the Measure of Academic Progress and AIMSweb. Some of these tests are taken more than once throughout the school year.

Kindergarten students took the KRA, a national test, within the first 15 days of school to assess the skills they developed in preschool. These skills included language and literacy, math, science, social studies, motor skills and physical well-being. It replaced the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy test this year, which was administered on paper.

This test is diagnostic, therefore the students do not receive a grade.

The KRA is an observational test, so there are not set times for the teachers to administer it to a class. With so many students, finding time for one-on-one sessions creates a new difficulty.

There is "inner stress to constantly find moments to assess," Smith said.

However, Kindergarten Readiness Program staff aids in these assessments and works with children whose performance indicates they are not on track with their skills. The staff helps prepare these students for advancement to the first grade.

**"I feel they have a lifetime ahead of them to learn the word 'test,' but not in kindergarten."**

KAREN SMITH

Lomond Principal Carina Freeman said that while the KRA is more time consuming than the KRA-L, "one of the positive things is that it gives a more holistic view of the child."

Kindergarteners took the MAP online exam to measure their math and language skills Sept. 3-30. They will take this assessment again March 16-27.

AIMSweb, a written test, measures the kindergarteners' letter and sound fluency, including uppercase and lowercase letter recognition. The students took the test in September, but will take it again two more times.

The next AIMSweb administration will fall between Jan. 21 and Feb. 6; the third, between May 11 and May 22.

When asked about the computer-administered tests she took, Boulevard Elementary School kindergarten student Maya Shrestha said, "They were really long. I like using the mouse, but only for games."

The kindergarten students are not



allowed to receive help on these tests. If a kindergartener asks his or her teacher for help, the teacher is only permitted to reword the question.

Emily Shrestha, Shaker Heights High School English teacher and parent of Boulevard kindergartener Maya Shrestha, disagrees with the increased testing regimen.

"It's just wrong," she said. "I think the testing that the state and the government are mandating is replacing more valuable tests that the teachers have done for years."

Boulevard Elementary kindergarten teacher Kelly Kunchik agreed. "Given that these children are so young, we do have too many assessments in place," she said. "Not all of these assessments are great, accurate measurement tools for kindergarten students."

The possible benefits of these assessments however, were acknowledged by teachers.

"[The tests] give us knowledge of where each student is at, and it can help us look at the individual student's needs and teach them from there," Kelly said.

Rick Leibovich, a kindergarten teacher at Mercer Elementary School, agreed. "I do think it's good information," he said, "and is no waste of time."

Yet both parents and teachers addressed the negative aspects of testing children at such an early age.

Emily Shrestha said, "If the kids are turned off by the testing, then it's not going to be the same kindergarten experience that people used to have, where it was this nurturing, fun, safe environment. Now you have tests that are going to put you in placements."

Smith said, "The testing must be in chunks, or the students will break into tears. I feel they have a lifetime ahead of them to learn the word test, but not in kindergarten."



Emily Shrestha

Mikkael Sekeres, parent of Boulevard kindergartener Silas Sekeres, said his son "does recognize when he has a test, and he doesn't have a positive reaction to that."

"We should test as needed, but kindergarten does seem rather young to be testing kids," said Brendan Foreman, parent of Fernway kindergartener Ruth Foreman.

The teachers believe that through their young students' eyes, testing does not yet have negative connotation.

"Kindergarten students are just happy-go-lucky kids and they just go with the flow," Kunchik said.

Smith agreed. "Kindergarten students know no difference," she said, "They love doing anything one-on-one with their teacher."

Leibovich added, "The students were unaware of success or failure, and all came

## Shaker Heights Schools: 2014-2015 Kindergarten Testing Days

Three mandated state exams, 43 days blocked off for administration

August 2014						
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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31						

September 2014						
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December 2014						
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January 2015						
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February 2015						
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March 2015						
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April 2015						
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May 2015						
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31						

June 2015						
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July 2015						
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ABBY WHITE/THE SHAKERITE

**"If the kids are turned off by the testing, then it's not going to be the same kindergarten experience that people used to have where it was this nurturing, fun, safe environment."**

EMILY SHRESTHA

out smiling. We treated it as an activity, and they thought of it as a treat."

However, the purpose of these assessments were not clear to kindergartener Maya Shrestha. "I don't know why I do those tests," she said.

Despite efforts from the teachers and district at curriculum nights and parent-teacher conferences, some parents are unaware of the specifics of state-mandated tests.

"Although I read every bit of information from the school and class, and I volunteer frequently, I have no clue about what testing has been done in kindergarten," said Kelly Moody, parent of Mercer kindergartener Finnegan Moody.

Carisa Tilton, mother of Onaway kindergartener Adelle Tilton, seconded Moody. "They haven't told us much about the testing," she said.

Freeman said that at Lomond's open house, "We really tried to address anxiety issues, which we haven't had any. We've been really proactive in letting our parents know what to expect."

Some parents believe that there is an



Maya Shrestha

overload of tests on their kindergarteners.

"I have heard about the crazy amount of testing. I think that's too much for a kid that age," said Rebecca Moore, mother of Onaway Elementary

School kindergartener Hannah Moore.

"It's too much," agreed Jacqueline Prude, a mother of Fernway Elementary School kindergartener Adeline Prude.

"I think too much time is being taken away from class."

Smith said, "Having taught kindergarten in the Shaker Heights City School District directly after graduating from college since 1979, I've been a part of the many transitions, shifts, strategies and goals in Shaker. I know that our administration understands, but we still have to get all the testing done."

"Part of me every day on the way to work ponders upon, 'I wish we had a full day just to teach!'"



# Didn't Do It? Don't Worry, You Have Another Chance ... and Another

Under new policy, SMS teachers cannot assign zeroes, must accept late work as district standardizes grading

MARCIA BROWN EDITOR IN CHIEF

**N**o more zeroes for missing work. Mandatory acceptance of late work. Chances to retake tests, rewrite plagiarized papers and redo assignments.

When the year began at Shaker Middle School, a new era of grading began as well. And similar changes are coming to the high school as the district, in keeping with its strategic plan, pursues "consistent grading and homework practices/protocols," designed to provide unlimited opportunities for mastery, beginning with elementary schools, followed by the middle school and after that the high school by 2018.

David Glasner, in his first year as middle school principal, came to Shaker knowing that revising the grading policy would be an immediate project, and over the summer, teacher leaders and administrators met to discuss the middle school handbook -- in which the new grading policy would be printed. The middle school's resulting new policy is a "living" document, according to Glasner, that staff will continually revise.

The district's embrace of mastery-based learning, a philosophy specifies students must show their understanding of the material through summative assessment, and the resulting changes in grading policies are linked to an education philosophy that is spreading across the nation.

## Middle School Grading Policy

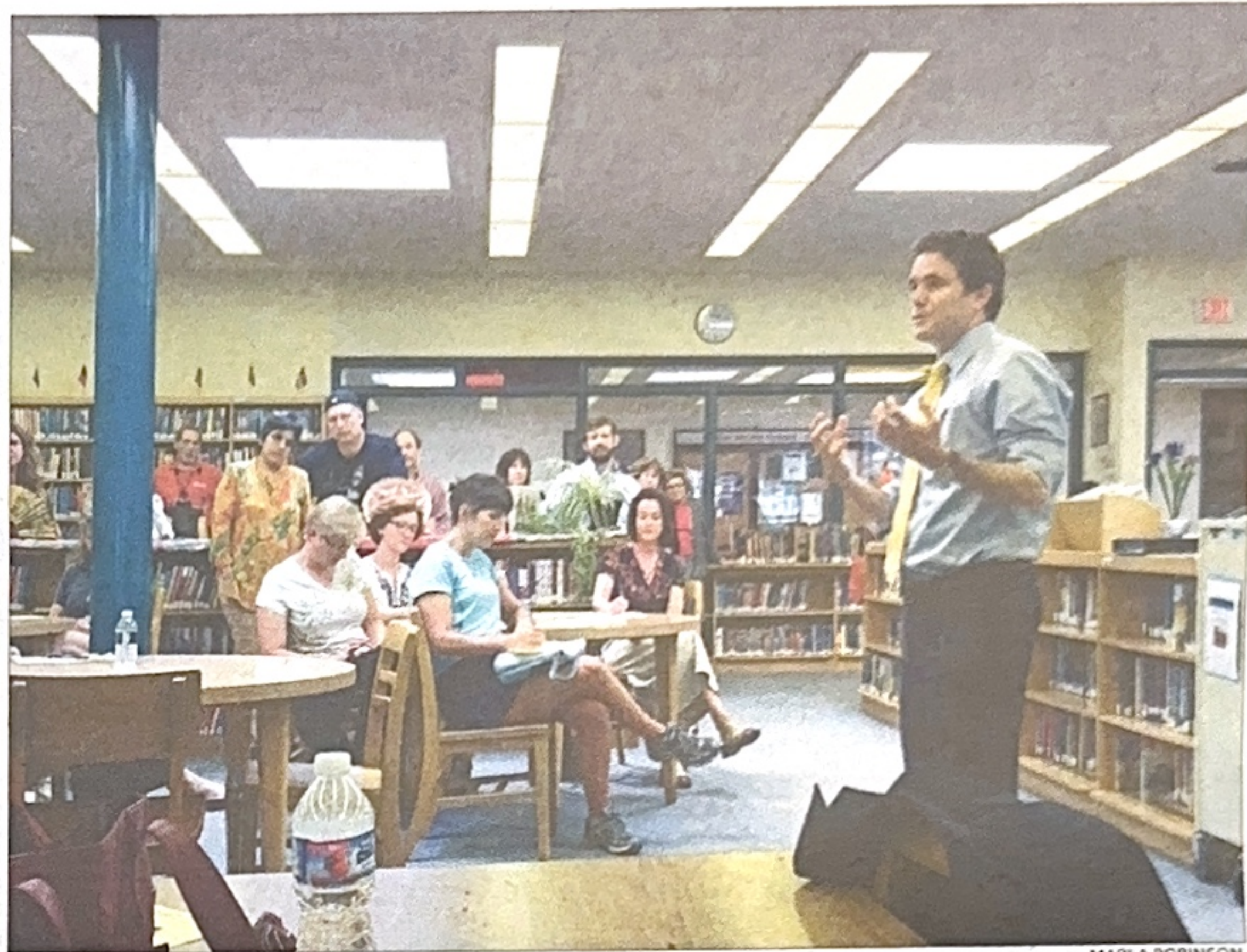
Glasner began reviewing the grading policies of department chairpersons and other teachers this past summer. He and his assistant principals, Miata Hunter and Robert Rea, analyzed "specific language, looking at the math," he said.

Glasner formed an internal "leadership institute," comprising department chair-



Harlan Friedman-Romell

**"The classes are easier this year than last, but teachers still take off points for late work."**



MARLA ROBINSON

Middle School Principal David Glasner speaks to parents in the middle school library after he was hired last spring. One of Glasner's first initiatives as principal has been instituting a new, standardized grading policy.

persons, team leaders and other teachers.

Glasner noted the new grading policy, which the leadership institute devised, is "pretty similar" to that of his previous school, the Urban Assembly Academy of Government and Law in New York City. This public high school, a part of the Urban Assembly schools network, had 312 students, 42 percent of whom were African American, 52 percent of whom were Hispanic, four percent Caucasian and four percent Asian, according to New York City's Department of Education's 2012-2013 Quality Review Report.

"We presented [the policy] to them, they got input and we got that solidified by the beginning of the school year," Glasner said. The policy is published in the Middle School Student Handbook, which is reviewed by Assistant Superintendent Marla Robinson and Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.

Glasner wrote in an email that some grading policy changes resulted from "input from the leadership institute participants." They included alignment to IB MYP standards, inclusion of the IB rubric in the policy and fixes to the errors in the grading curve. The policy also included "additional information and clarity on effort and citizenship grades based on some of the conversations we had at the leadership institute."

However, some of the teachers felt their concerns were not addressed. "I advocated (along with a few others) pretty passionately for teacher-driven deadlines in terms of the late policy, for example, to no avail," English teacher Erika Pfeiffer wrote in an email. Pfeiffer is a team leader and teacher leader who attended the leadership institute.

The new policy allows students to turn

in late work with "up to 30 percent deduction of the final grade," but does not specify how late the work can be submitted. She acknowledged that when the policies "were initially being written at some point prior to our meeting, that there were other teacher leaders whose input went into their creation," Glasner clarified, however, that the draft presented to the institute was written with his assistant principals.

So far, eighth grader Harlan Friedman-Romell has noticed a change.

"The classes are easier this year than last, but teachers still take off points for late work," said Friedman-Romell. "You were always able to turn in late work, just the grade would suffer. Some of my teachers last year did not allot the appropriate time for late work from absences, and I know a lot of other kids also had similar problems."

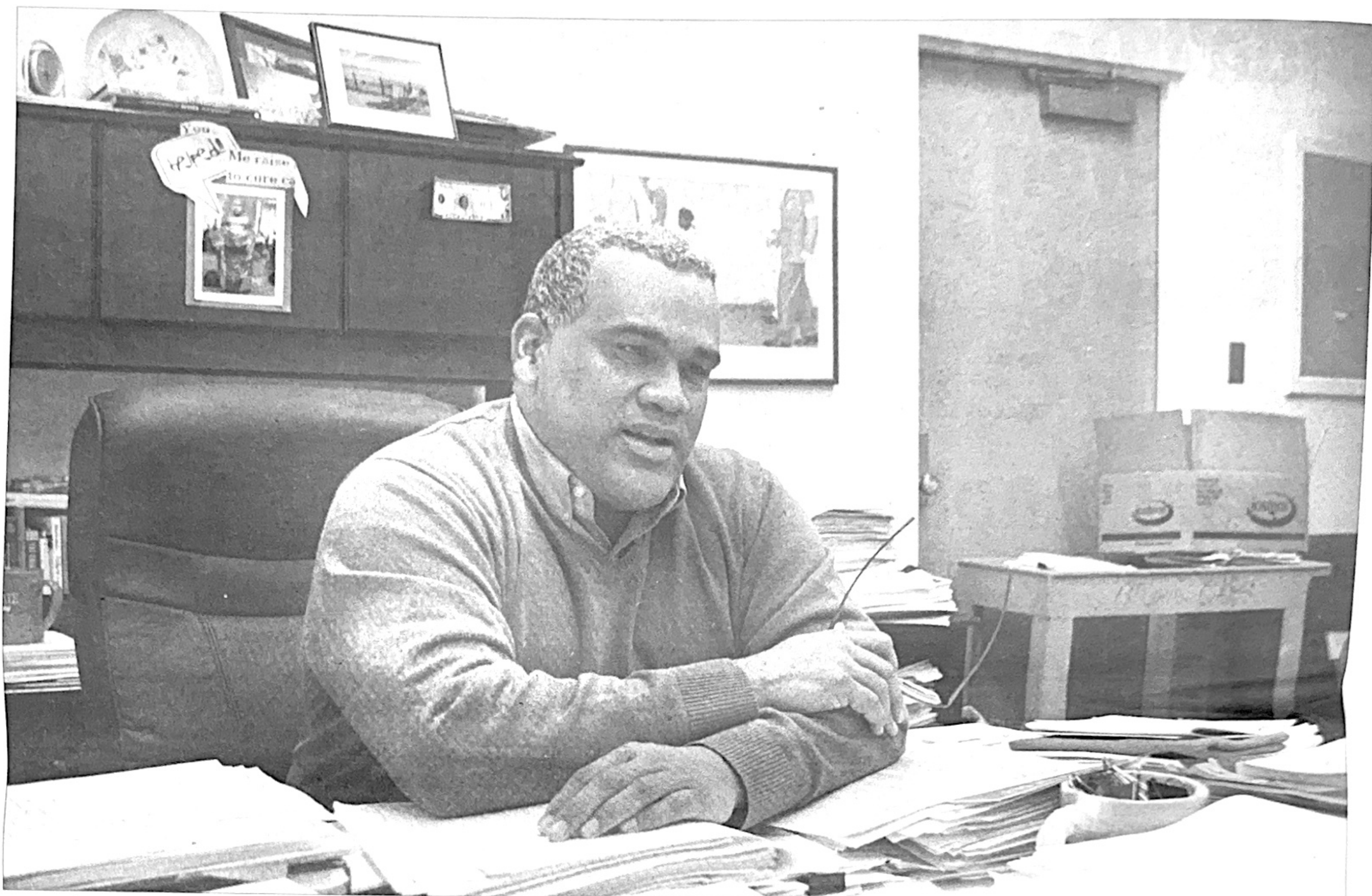
Friedman-Romell said he thinks it's OK for students to turn in late work, and that most students at the middle school turn work in on time. However, he admitted that last year he had few missing assignments, saying "this year I have quite a few."

"[N]ot everyone was 'on board' with the policy (no zeroes, curving all grades below a certain score, etc.) but we are responsible for enforcing it," Pfeiffer said.

Lindsey emphasized the institute's importance. "Prior to the leadership institute, the grading policy was consistent within the subject areas," he said. "The leadership institute allowed us to go toward a building wide standardization model of grading practices, which is what teachers wanted."

Seventh grade Individual Societies Department Chair Mike Sears also participated in the leadership institute. (Individual Societies was previously known as social studies





MARCIA BROWN/THE SHAKERITE

**High School Principal** Michael Griffith speaks about potential changes to the high school grading policy. Like the high school, the middle school now no longer allows zeros. The minimum grade is now a 45 percent. "Beating you with a stick and saying, 'I'm just going to give you zeros,'" said Griffith, "that's not motivating you, particularly the student who is already disengaged."

and changed to align with IB requirements).

"There were a few things that we discussed at the leadership institute, and there were several brainstorming sessions and a couple minor changes made to the handbook," he said. "However, I do not recall much discussion about the grading policy. The impression was that this part of the handbook was not up for discussion."

Hutchings said that he is typically involved during a process such as the grading policy's development, though he may not attend every meeting. He demands that a teacher always be involved in the document's creation.

"If [a] teacher was involved and administrators, [and] at times parents as well as students, then, it's easier for me to support than something that just comes from a principal," Hutchings said.

Glasner emphasized that this policy is not static.

"I told the teachers, this is meant to be a living document in that we are constantly trying to improve our grading policies," Glasner said.

Sears said that part of the reasoning for the policy was to make the middle school

**"This is meant to be a living document in that we are constantly trying to improve our grading policies."**

**DAVID GLASNER**

more like the high school. While the high school does not yet have a standardized grading policy, it does not allow teachers to give zeros for missing work until the end of a grading period and encourages redos, re-takes and revisions.

Hutchings and Robinson made no changes to the new middle school policy when they reviewed it.

"Prior to the request being made, I think that we set up some parameters. We didn't discuss exactly what the cut off would be about, just the fact that if you give a student a zero, in a sense it almost prevents them from passing a course, depending on the weight that actual assignment is given," Hutchings said.

One of the biggest changes in the new policy is the purge of any zeros from grades. The base grade – the lowest grade a student can receive – is a 45 percent.

"This is the thing that most people get kind of up in arms about, because what it feels like is that students are getting something for nothing," said Camille A. Farrington, an associate professor at the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration.

Farrington was referenced in the policy as a source of scholarship. "Students who aren't doing any work are getting 45 points. Particularly to kids who did the work, it feels unfair." However, Farrington believes the change doesn't alter the letter grades students receive, but gives students more opportunity to pass.

"Getting a 45 or a 50 doesn't sound nearly as bad as getting a 20 or a 10 or a zero," said Glasner. "But if you think about it, in letter grades, which is ultimately what it comes out to be, if you get a 50 or a 45 you're still failing."

According to Sears, some teachers so far have said their grades are inflated while others report little effect.

Farrington explained the reasoning behind the shift. "I would argue that the problem is a mathematical problem and not a problem of fairness," she said. She thinks that the problem lies with the conversion from a 100-point scale of grading to a four-point scale for GPA calculations. She cites the unequal intervals for letter grades as the problem.

"It's not an equal interval scale," said Farrington. "Zero-59 is an F, and then you



get 10 points for all the other grades. Making the lowest grade a 45 is actually just truncating the lower part of the scale." It's no longer that 0-59 is an F, with intervals of 10 for every other letter grade. Now, F is only an interval of 15, making the intervals more similar.

"Really a zero should be more in line with a 50, but we wanted to distinguish between something that was not turned in at all and something that got a low grade," Glasner said, explaining why the 45 base grade is below a 50.

Farrington believes using the four-point GPA scale would be more efficient for grading, as it would eliminate the conversion. However, in its present imperfect form, the alternate--the 45 percent base grade -- is criticized.

"I think some parents look at it as 'My kid should get a zero,'" Sears said.

Middle school parent Kim McFadden disagreed. "There have been many challenges with missing assignments," she wrote in an email, "but I have felt the teachers have been receptive to working with the boys in reference to accepting the late work rather than getting a zero."

"When the kids know they can make a difference with a little effort, they not only produce the work, but they try harder to produce QUALITY work because they want to earn as many points as possible," wrote Pfeiffer. "When you can get them to engage at that level, they learn."



Camille A. Farrington

Pfeiffer said students no longer have eight percents and thus aren't discouraged from completing future assignments that, under the traditional grading system, would have

increased their averages but still left them failing.

"People feel like they're getting something for nothing, but in reality it's still an F," Farrington said.

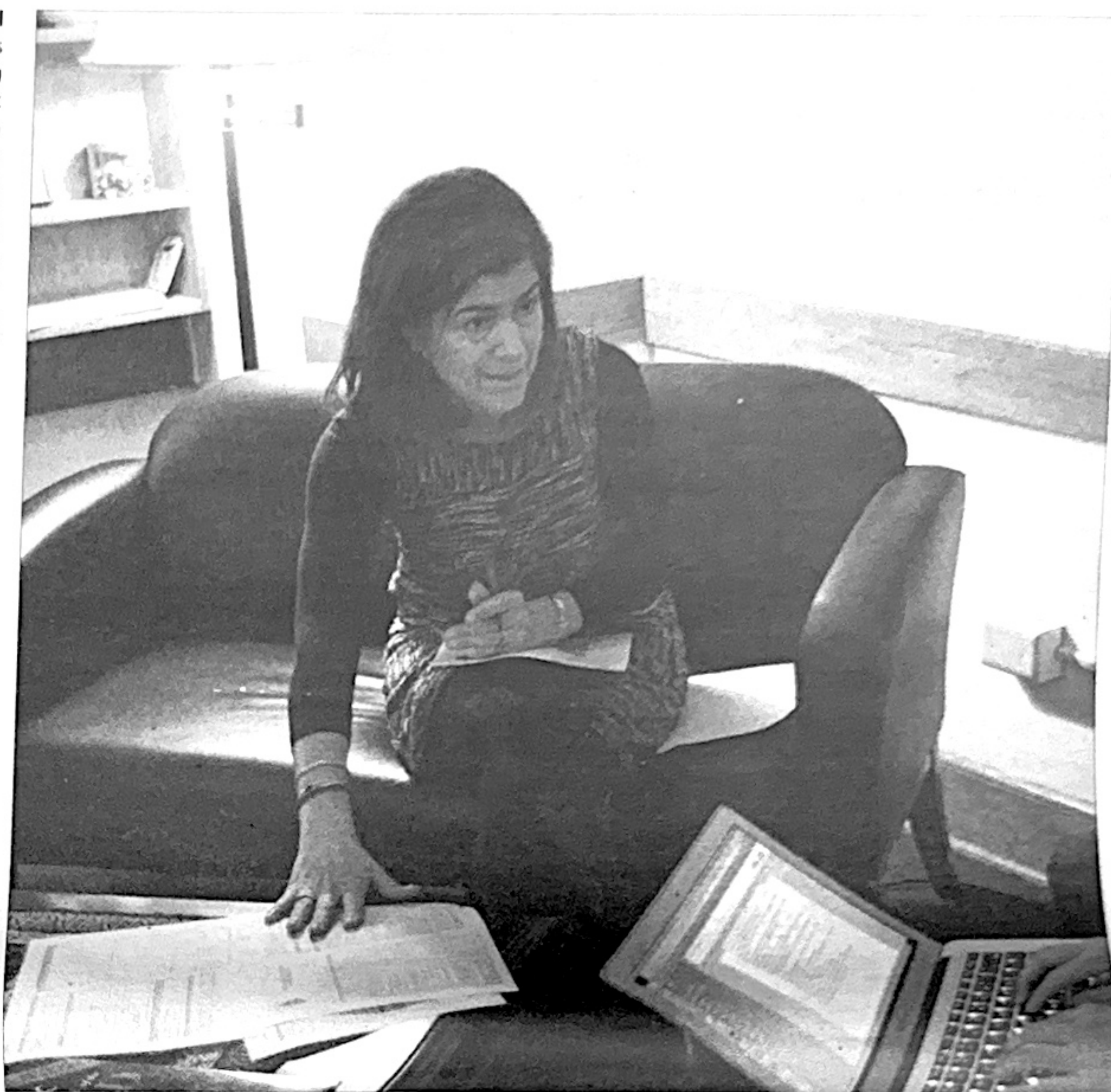
"Very few people present it or explain it that way," Farrington said. She notes that on a 100-point scale, a zero is an outlier that drags the average down. "Anybody who knows anything about math can see that that's true."

However, students at the school find the policy benefits them in more ways than expected. "I do like the policy very much, but probably for the wrong reasons. It allows me to have missing assignments and still have A's," Friedman-Romell said.

Griffith said that it should be a 50-point scale or a scale of 100 with 20-point intervals. A 100-point scale with unequal intervals is "mathematically wrong," he said. "We've been doing this wrong for I don't know how many centuries."

"The truth is that if you don't do something, or you do something poorly, you're

**Onaway Principal Amy Davis** explains how Onaway's grading policy works, and how it meshes with Common Core State Standards and the Middle Years Programme. The report card at Onaway spells out each of the many skills students should master at the end of grading periods according to the outlined curriculum and the Common Core Standards. This style of assessment might be an option for the middle school in the future.



SAM BUTLER/THE SHAKERITE

**"If a student gets a zero, they're going to have to redo. I think because we don't give grades, they have to master it."**

**AMY DAVIS**

still failing. This hasn't changed it," said Glasner. "We've changed it so that mathematically, if you continue to fail, or you are failing, mathematically, you have some hope of moving into a passing range."

Pfeiffer however, believes that while this does give students hope, too much leeway in deadlines creates a culture of infinite second chances.

"I feel it's unfair to the students who do what they are supposed to do and adhere to deadlines," said Pfeiffer. "Most importantly, it sets students up for later failure if we pretend that there are never real deadlines and that there are always second chances."

"I think the stakes for students, if you inculcate the notion over time that you can redo everything, over time they'll be up for a life-devastating problem," said Ken Ledford, associate professor of history and law at Case Western Reserve University.

Before the policy was implemented, the administration discussed these questions of redos and base grades.

"So the conversation that we had prior to the grading policy being created or established was the fact that we want to make sure that students, one, they are held accountable," Hutchings said. If students are able to make up a grade or receive a 45 at worst, "some people say that that causes a student to be lazy," he said. "And I don't agree with that."

"I think that it tells the student that you're going to be held accountable for co-

ing the work," said Hutchings. "It doesn't mean that you can't get an F, it just means that you can't get a zero."

"Beating you with a stick and saying, 'I'm just going to give you zeros,'" said high school Principal Michael Griffith, "that's not motivating you, particularly the student who is already disengaged. They're not jumping up and down saying, 'That zero matters to me.'"

Farrington added that teaching students and compelling students to do work shouldn't just come from grade incentivization.

"I think it's important to kind of talk to kids both about the importance of what they're learning and the importance of learning how to be a good student," she said. When teachers assign students tasks, teachers usually let the students decide how to accomplish them, according to Farrington, who also taught high school for 15 years. Instead, Farrington said teachers should make it "part of the culture" and "a social part of what happens in class" as they learn how to manage assignments and develop as "strategic learners." She believes that this grading policy is "a good opportunity to focus on that."

Hutchings doesn't want students to be able to receive an F on an assignment and move on without mastering the material. He wants to ensure that students complete the work at a higher level.

"We want [students] to be resilient and



Transdisciplinary Program of Inquiry Shaker Heights City School District Onaway Elementary School 2014/2015						
T H E M E / G R A D E	<u>Who We Are</u> An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; <u>what it means to be human.</u>	<u>Where We Are In Place &amp; Time</u> An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; <u>the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind</u> ; the relationships between and then interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.	<u>How We Express Ourselves</u> An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, <u>beliefs and values</u> ; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.	<u>How The World Works</u> An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; <u>how humans use their understanding of scientific principles</u> ; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.	<u>How We Organize Ourselves</u> An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; <u>societal decision-making</u> ; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.	<u>Sharing The Planet</u> An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; <u>communities and the relationships within and between them</u> ; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.
	EXHIBITION PLANNER	<u>Central Idea:</u> Human migration causes cooperation and conflict.  <u>Lines of Inquiry:</u> interactions among groups, the reasons for immigration/migration, impact of various cultures on the population  <u>Summative Assessment:</u>	<u>Central Idea:</u> Values and beliefs influence economic decision making.  <u>Lines of Inquiry:</u> individual financial responsibility, entrepreneurship, analyzing tables and charts  <u>Summative Assessment:</u>	<u>Central Idea:</u> Scientific inquiry allows for an understanding of matter and energy.  <u>Lines of Inquiry:</u> scientific inquiry and ways of knowing, physical properties of matter allow the transfer of electricity and/or heat, conservation of matter  <u>Summative Assessment:</u>	<u>Central Idea:</u> Human actions and decision making influence how people maintain order.  <u>Lines of Inquiry:</u> leadership and decision making, personal participation and responsibility, governmental documents  <u>Summative Assessment:</u>	<u>Central Idea:</u> Living and non-living things are affected by changes on earth.  <u>Lines of Inquiry:</u> landforms and water forms, natural and manmade changes (slow and rapid changes), fossils  <u>Summative Assessment:</u>

Onaway's curriculum follows this document. This is the fourth grade page, which outlines the skills students should master in MYP's program of inquiry. Each theme listed horizontally is pursued in each level, with an added level of complexity each year. Below are the units that Onaway uses for their students to meet the requirements.

persistent and to have the grit to get the job done," said Hutchings. "It may not be perfect, but you will finish it. And I think that that sends a louder message that 'OK, if you don't do it, you get an F, and we'll just move on.'"

"I think the goal for us is to work with the student, work with the parent so that the work is actually completed—that not completing your assignment is not an option," Hutchings said.

"I think that is a standard that we need to have across the board in Shaker Heights," said Hutchings. "I think that's going to make us even greater as a district. You know, we're already great, but what's going to make us even greater is making sure that 100 percent of our students are held accountable for completing their work."

Hutchings believes that giving zeros is destructive to this completion philosophy.

"I mean, the research shows that providing students with zeros is really detrimental to their educational careers, and it doesn't help a student in regards to being a better student or having a better educational experience in our schools," Hutchings said.

Glasner reinforced this idea by adding that students do the assessments to show mastery and learning.

"I also want to emphasize that we don't give assessments just to measure completion," said Glasner. "So the emphasis is on students doing the assessment because it is a learning experience for everyone involved."

**"I disagree with the premise that authentic learning takes place when students are just scrambling to complete paperwork for points."**

ERIKA PFEIFFER

"I have found the teachers motivated to reteach or go over the material with my boys so they understand the material rather than the boys scoring poorly and never truly 'getting' it," wrote McFadden. "In many of the subjects, a student needs to comprehend the material to be successful in moving forward."

In particular, McFadden wrote, "Having the ability to stay after school and meet with the teachers during conference time is a wonderful resource."

Sears said that many parents are confused by the reasoning behind the new policy. "You have to explain to parents the policy, and when I've explained it a few times I've just gotten a confused reaction," said Sears. "[It's] more an educational thing. Using teacher language, parents just don't understand why you would get credit for something you didn't work on at all."

However, McFadden said her sons' teachers have communicated with her well so far. "I felt all of my sons' teachers did a good job in explaining the new grading process during curriculum night. In addition, all of the teachers provided syllabus with their grading information," wrote McFadden. "My experiences with my boys' teachers have been positive. I have found the teachers to be responsive to emails and communication. I truly get the sense the teachers want to my boys to be successful learners."

Giving zeros lowers students' self-esteem and dampens any hope a student might have of passing, Hutchings said. "You still

want to give somebody an opportunity to redeem themselves so if they have a change of heart and they want to be devoted and educated, we want them to think they can actually make a difference and change their grade."

Furthermore, Hutchings and Griffith believe that allowing a student to get a zero means the student didn't develop mastery.

"The notion, I think, that I'm just going to give you a big fat zero and let you off on the way to the next assignment, I didn't hold you accountable to mastery," said Griffith. "I may have held you accountable in terms of behavior, but academically I didn't hold you accountable to mastery. So if I'm intending to say that my class is about every student demonstrating mastery, I can't just put the big fat zero on the grade book and walk away."

In addition, this policy gives students a better chance of passing the course.

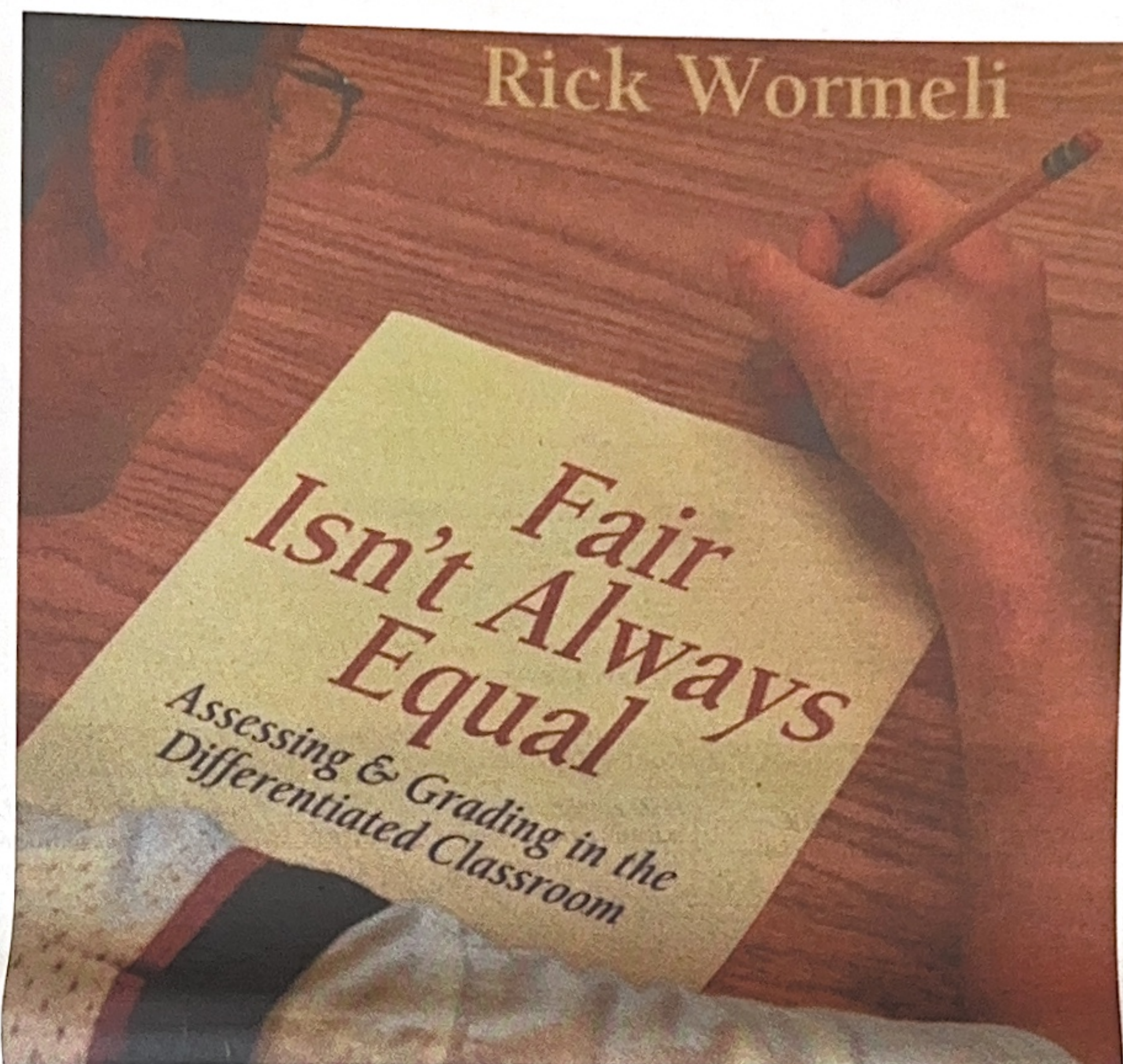
"So, if a student fails a test or paper early on in the semester, and then shows growth over time, this will allow them mathematically to pass, whereas in the past, mathematically, that may not have been the case," Glasner said.

"The benefit I have seen for students is that it takes a lot more than it did before to render a grade completely unrecoverable," wrote Pfeiffer. "This does actually seem to encourage them to put in an effort to bring their grades up because they know it's possible to do so."

Griffith added that this idea has been a



Author Rick Wormeli, in his book "Fair Isn't Always Equal," discusses the merits of switching to mastery-based grading and how teachers should assess students using tools such as allowing redos and extending time for makeups. He also emphasizes the need for differentiated teaching, a style that calls on teachers to address each student's learning differently based on their learning strengths and weaknesses.



MARCIA BROWN/THE SHAKERITE

part of his work on grading policy. "That's [been] my work with the staff, is the automatic zero doesn't matter for those kids," he said. "If it mattered for those kids, you would see a change in behavior. If it's not motivating them, then it really isn't a good tool."

Students notice the no-zero policy in their grades, although not all teachers abide by it. "Some of my teachers forget the 'no zero policy' and I have zeros for homework assignments, where in reality, no one in the entire school should have an assignment lower than 45 percent," Friedman-Romell wrote. He added that no-zeros make it easier to maintain higher grades, if students test well.

In the policy's first one and a half quarters of use, Sears hasn't seen a big change.

"To be honest, I would say that I'm seeing the same behaviors from seventh graders I've seen for 20 years," said Sears. "I think sometimes we think that grades and points are motivators, but there's some kids who are really doing well regardless of what the policy is. They have the skill and work ethic and they're doing really well, and then there's other students who maybe they're not reading at grade level or they have other problems outside of school. So the 45 percent doesn't matter to them in terms of their effort."

A committee of high school faculty and administrators will develop a standard grading policy. As for the 45 percent base grade, Griffith is unsure whether such a policy could work at the high school. "Forty-five

percent minimum is an attempt to answer those questions. Whether that's the best answer is open for debate," Griffith said.

The new policy also has provisions for students who fall behind first semester. It outlines a path to pass if the student struggles or endures extraneous circumstances such as an extended absence due to illness. If students fail the first semester, the grading policy lets them pass the year if they receive a minimum of a C second semester. The students must also pass a cumulative exam at the end of the year, such as a final or a standardized test. Then, the student's teacher must endorse passing the course.

Glasner said this situation rarely occurs. "In middle school, it doesn't really apply as frequently. And even in high school, I can probably count on one hand the times that this actually came into play," he said. "But the reason that's in there is because it promotes the idea of mastery-based learning, that it's about mastering learning objectives."

When it does occur, however, this policy gives students a another chance. If the student succeeds in the second semester on the cumulative exam, "those are two strong pieces of evidence that you've mastered the learning objectives for the course," Glasner said.

However, Glasner said that research shows it's very difficult to catch up once you've fallen behind. He added that people who fall into this category do not intentionally fail first semester. To pass second semester, they might get a tutor and "try to

figure out how to pass second semester," he said.

"Here at the middle school, we have conference time, so, you know, in that situation, we do recommend that students attend conferences and that they go to tutoring center," said Glasner. "We do have internal supports for students who need extra support and extra time. Sometimes parents will hire a private tutor, but that's up to the parents."

When asked if the policy is a substitute for social promotion, a policy intended to promote students to the next grade level even if they've failed one or more classes to keep students with peers of their age group, Hutchings and Glasner both responded, "No." Hutchings expanded on his answer saying he thinks the policy "gives students just more hope and more options and more opportunity to be successful, to move forward," he said.

At this time, Glasner isn't sure how this will change the graduation rate, but "mathematically this gives students a chance to dig out of a hole," he said. "The grading policy wasn't designed with the goal of trying to reduce our retention numbers, but with the goal in mind of demonstrating meeting learning objectives."

However, Pfeiffer hasn't seen a big increase in students doing revisions and retakes. "I have been a little disappointed in the lack of response to the opportunity to retake quizzes and tests, and to revise writing assignments for additional credit," she wrote. "I'm not going to force the issue, but it surprises me that students don't take advantage of such easy improvement."

"Some students struggle with the weights of assessments, but overall the students appreciate the opportunity to retake assessments to improve their grades," SHMS IB Coordinator Dexter Lindsey wrote of the effect of formative and summative weights, and redo opportunities.

The formative portion of a student's grade allows students multiple opportunities to complete an assignment for mastery, including redos, retakes and revisions. This component of the grade is usually weighted less than the summative component. Typically, formative includes homework, projects and work done outside of class. Formative includes unit tests and other assessments. Depending on the teacher, quizzes can be categorized under either.

Friedman-Romell explains how this division of the grade affects some students.

"The largest portion of our grade relies on testing, so some kids (including me) don't have stellar grades in the formative category, but we have good test grades," wrote Friedman-Romell.

"If you are a good test taker, then you don't have to try in the formative category due to the no-zero policy," he wrote.

Much of the new policy correlates with the expectations of Shaker becoming an Middle Years Programme district. If approved, Shaker will be one of seven

**"The idea is that we're not satisfied if your understanding is at the level of a C or a D or an F. We're not going to then just move on from there."**

**CAMILLE A. FARRINGTON**



2014-15 Student  
& Parent Handbook

INQUIRERS *Tolerant/able Thinkers Communicators Open-minded*  
 Principled Caring Risk-takers **Balanced** Reflective **Appreciation**  
 Commitment Confidence **Cooperation** CREATIVITY Curiosity *Empathy*  
 Enthusiasm Independence **BE SAFE** *Integrity Respect Tolerance* *Inquirers*  
*Knowledgeable Thinkers Communicators* Principled Caring Risk-takers  
*Balanced* Reflective *Appreciation* Commitment Confidence **COOPERATION**  
 Creativity CURIOSITY Empathy Enthusiasm Independence *Integrity*  
 Respect Tolerance *Inquirers* Knowledgeable Thinkers COMMUNICATORS  
 Principled **BE RESPECTFUL** *Caring Risk-takers* *Shared* Reflective  
 Appreciation *Commitment* Confidence *Cooperation* Creativity Curiosity  
 Empathy *Enthusiasm* Independence *Integrity* Respect **TOLERANCE**  
 INQUIRERS Knowledgeable Thinkers Communicators PRINCIPLED  
 Open-minded *Caring Risk-takers* *Balanced* Reflective *Appreciation*  
 Commitment Confidence **BE RESPONSIBLE** *Cooperation* Creativity  
*Curiosity* Empathy **ENTHUSIASM** *Independence* *Integrity* *Respect* *Tolerance*  
*Inquirers* Knowledgeable Thinkers Communicators Open-minded Caring  
**PRINCIPLED** *Balanced* Reflective *Appreciation* Commitment Confidence  
*Cooperation* Creativity *Curiosity* Empathy *Enthusiasm* *Independence* *Integrity*  
 Respect **TOLERANCE** *Inquirers* Knowledgeable THINKERS Communicators  
 Principled Open-minded Caring Risk-takers *Balanced* Reflective *Appreciation*  
*Commitment* Confidence *Cooperation* Creativity Curiosity  
**BE INFORMED** *Integrity* *Respect* *Tolerance*

**SARA MESIANO /THE SHAKERITE**

The Shaker Heights Middle School's grading policy is designed with the following factors in mind:

The Shaker Heights Middle School's grading policy is designed with the following factors in mind:

- The purpose of grades is to provide students and parents with resources feedback about their progress on important learning outcomes that are aligned to Common Core-aligned skills and the International Baccalaureate Framework.
- Student work provides teachers with evidence of student progress and information about areas in which students need additional support.
- Students must be allowed to have multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on assignments. This means providing students with:
  - Multiple assessments for learning outcomes
  - Opportunities to revisit, refine and revise work
  - Opportunities for students who skip or choose to demonstrate proficiency
- Formative Assessment measures student progress over time, while summative assessment measures whether students met a final benchmark.
- Our goal is to establish consistency across grades and within departments in order to eliminate confusion about grades.

At 50-15, grade distribution is based on the following breakdown:

Formative Assessments	35%
Quizzes, class work, drafts, discussions, exit tickets, Homework, etc.	

Summative Assessments	65%
Projects, tests, final draft essays, lab reports, etc.	

### Grading Policies

- [illegible]

SARA MESIANO // THE SHAKERITE

grade of a C and granting a year-long cumulative final assessment and if the student recommends continuation of the student's grade.

Students may be allowed to retake, refuse or receive similar formative and summative assignments in order to demonstrate proficiency and have the opportunity to pass.

Like all other grades, (B) degrees are required to be published on Grade Book and calculated in students' GPAs.

Grades of "C" are not allowed for missing or incomplete work. Teachers are to use (U) as the default mark for all missing assignments and a 10 as the base grade for all assignments that have been turned in. In order to ensure that students grading integrity on this scale, the following curve for all assignments:

Student Grade	Grade used in Grade Book
Missing	57
1-10	58
15-25	51
25-30	52
35-40	53
45-50	54
55-60	55
65-75	56

All grades above 20 should be entered as 0

On report cards, students will be assigned a letter grade that ranges from A-F, based on the

Following breakdowns:		Grass seed in Grade bank
Insect Grade	95-100	
A	85-90	
B	75-80	
C	65-70	
D	55-60	
	Below 50	

5. On IB units, students will be assigned the following grade that ranges from 0-5, based on

Following handwritten:

US Grade	Grade Level in Grade Study	Letter Grade
0	45	F
1	60	D
2	65	D
3	70	C
4	75	C
5	80	B
6	85	B
7	95	A

SARA MESIANO / THE SHAKERITE

**Shaker Heights Middle School's** new grading policy was printed in the school's student handbook student handbook. Two pages covered the new policy, which included a revised academic dishonesty policy, the division between summative and formative grades and the conversions of the Middle Years Programme rubric and grading percentages to letter grades.

pre-k through 12 MYP districts in the United States. To convert to letter grades, teachers must adjust from a 100-point scale of grading to a 4-point scale of letter grades. MYP's scale further requires teachers to convert grades from a 0-8 scale, to a 100-point percentage grade to letter grades. This creates inaccuracies of conversion, as the conversion from the MYP scale to a 100-point scale is not a perfect crossover, in addition to adding to teachers' burdens.

"Now the middle school currently, in their handbook, has a conversion from these MYP grades to a traditional grade. Now at the high school, we don't have a standardized form of that, and MYP says that we shouldn't," said John Moore, SHHS IB Coordinator and science teacher. "That that conversion would be up to the professional discretion--and that is the wording that they use. That the interpretation of these scores and what that means for traditional grades to the collaborative, professional discretion of the teachers teaching that subject at that specific course."

While the school is required to fulfill the state requirements, the Ohio Department of Education still wants districts to maintain autonomy.

The ODE does want districts to adopt policies that align with the Common Core Standards, according to John Charlton, associate director of communications for the ODE.

"We believe that while a district may have an overarching policy on grading, each teacher should be given some flexibility to make their own grading decision that again meet the needs and priorities of the students in that class," Charlton wrote in an email interview.

"Every student learns differently. At ODE, we want to see results," wrote Charlton. "The method in which a student achieves these standards is up to the districts, schools and teachers."

Hutchings reasoned that the shift towards mastery-based grading follows logically from Shaker's transition away from, for example, class valedictorians or lists of the colleges students attend beside students' names.

"At Shaker we don't have a valedictorian at Shaker Heights High School because our focus really needs to be on are you students really being prepared to go out into the world to take on whatever task they choose—whether it's going off to college, or going into a career or joining the military."

Yet, according to Glasner, for a high school to shift to a mastery-based grading system, it could take three to five years. Furthermore, the constraints of college prerequisites of grades and GPAs limit how schools make such an adjustment.

Although the high school has not made the adjustment, Hutchings said "that's something that's definitely on the table." He said that he wanted to wait to hear from teachers and administrators about such a policy change, saying "The sky is the limit."

However, Hutchings said, "I think it will over time shift more so into a standards-based reporting [of mastery]."

In praise for a mastery-based system, Hutchings said, "grades, to me, sometimes, they may not tell the full story of what a student knows and what they don't know."

He cites an interaction with an anonymous parent whose child received an A in a course. However, when the parent quizzed their child over the course's curriculum, the student wouldn't answer. A mastery-based system, Hutchings argues, will identify exactly what a student can and cannot do or understand. "I think that we should try to focus more on mastery of specific standards versus grades," he said.

This feeds directly into a growing consensus that students and teachers have become "bean-counters," as Griffith phrased

**“It places an undue burden on teachers to try to score piles of old work at report card time, when we are already scrambling to get current work graded in time for report cards.”**

**ERIKA PFEIFFER**

it. In other words, points have become the teacher's key motivational tool. Factored into grades, they can determine a student's future.

Hutchings emphasized that the overarching goal is to help students succeed in and beyond high school. "That is our goal – to be prepared to go to college, to start a career, to go into the military," he said. "To do that, you really have to have some guidelines that make it possible for kids to be successful."

To accomplish this goal, the administration has laid out their goals broadly—under which fall an adjustment in grading policy or academic supports to help a student flourish.

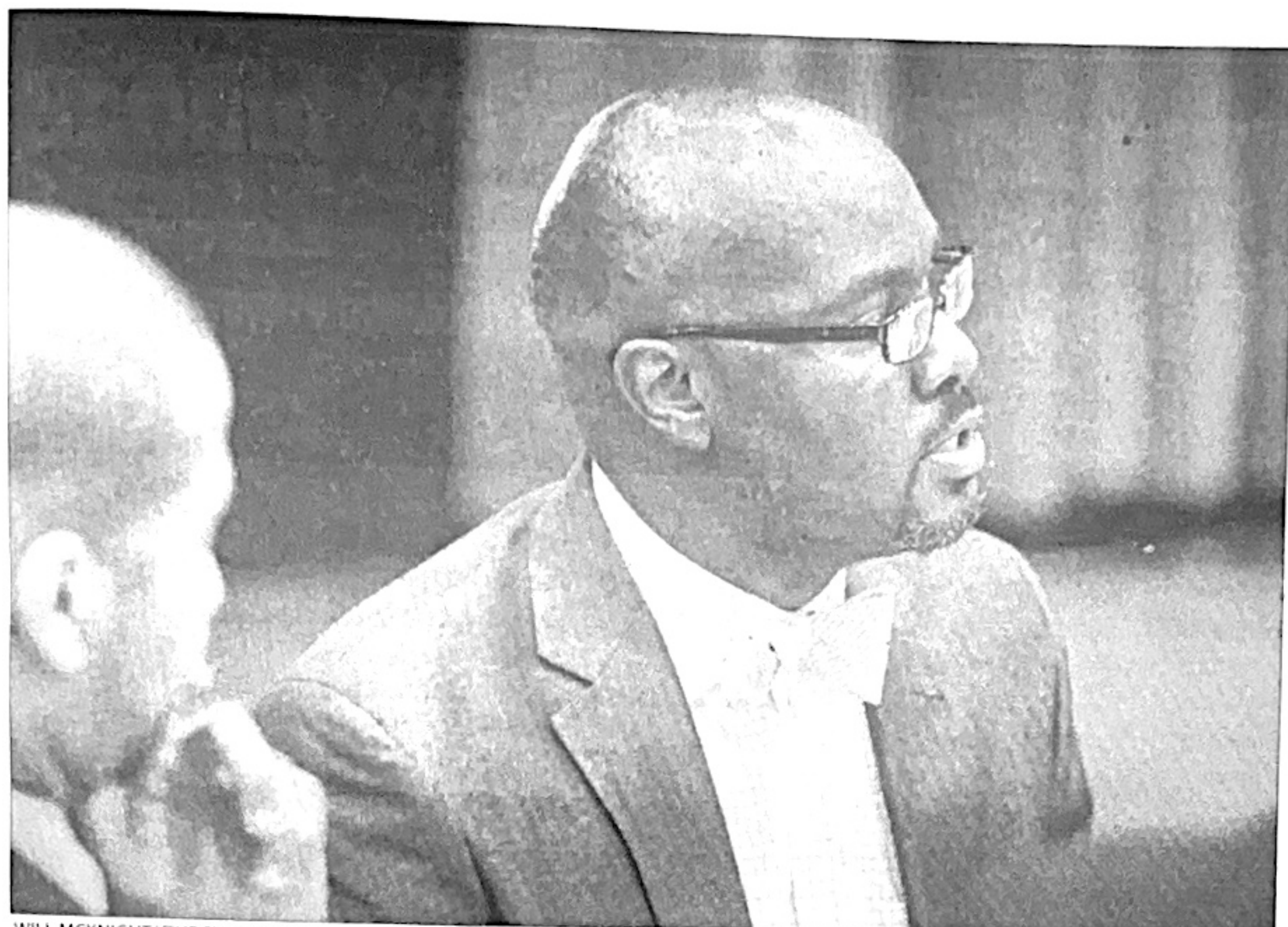
"One of our core values in our 5-year strategic plan is 'Students will succeed.' It doesn't say students can, students might, it says students will succeed," said Hutchings. "And a part of that is making sure we put parameters in place and we put opportunities in place for them to actually attain that."

Griffith assessed redos, revisions and retakes as a way to engage a student beyond the grade and into the learning process. "If I'm looking at you as a student, giving you feedback, are you really present?" he said. "Are you really coming to the table with your best effort? And if you are, let's roll up our sleeves and work together. And if you're not, how do I motivate you to bring more?"

"We've set a system where grades drive a whole system," said Farrington. "There are all kinds of reasons why students should learn." Schools should use different motivational tools which inherently stems from a different grading system, she said. In the schools that have made the switch, "... You have to actually have meaningful work, trying to solve the problem with the food pantry and in our neighborhood, and what motivates us if we're doing work we care about and we won't want to let people down."

Motivation is key to shifting successfully to a mastery-based system, Farrington said. She reasoned that students have been





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**Superintendent Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.** speaks during a meeting. "You know, we're already great, but what's going to make us even greater is making sure that 100 percent of our students are held accountable for completing their work," he said.

"socialized" to respond to grades. "I do work because I care about my grade," and so teachers have used that really heavily... 'You're gonna get points off if you don't do this,' and they have used points as the major motivational tool, and that ruins the whole enterprise of school," she said.

"Schools are the only institution where kids are really getting graded and that's the motivation," said Farrington. "Grades are just such an artificial thing. If you remove that and you have multiple opportunities to do it, and there I think if all we change is the grading system, then [not completing quality on-time work] is exactly the natural behavior because that's the system we've cultured people in." Farrington believes that a shift to mastery-based grades will only be successful if there is a shift, too, in how schools motivate students to learn.



Ken Ledford

Ledford, of CWRU, said that while eliminating grades would be ideal, in America it's a "pipe dream" because the "United States is a hyper-competitive society in which we want this fetishized system of grades." Ledford worries that certain skills have been lost, such as the ability to read and write long-form pieces. "The one thing I think is lost is long-form writing is dead, and they're wrong because ideas are complex and human life is complex and it takes lots of words to articulate the complexity of human life," he said. "People still read books and books are much longer than this." However, he does believe that there are other motivators outside of grades.

"In the absence of grades, what students garner is the esteem of their teachers," said Ledford. "Think back to Socrates on the stoa of Athens. He didn't give grades -- what he gave was his approval and his esteem to his

**"Schools are the only institution where kids are really getting graded and that's the motivation."**

**CAMILLE A. FARRINGTON**

pupil. They knew they would be better people; [they would] learn partly for themselves and learn for their professors' esteem." (A stoa is a covered porch of ancient Greek design.)

Farrington also noted that with Common Core standards, it doesn't make sense that grades don't correlate with standards. "It's ironic that we've have had standards and that's been a primary driving force, but your grades have nothing to do with whether or not you've met those standards," Farrington said. Farrington further stated the disparity between standardized test scores and grades. "Scores have nothing to do with grading," she said. "Grading has a life of its own that has nothing to do with the primary education doctrine of the last 20 years, and the move towards mastery grading is in line with a national move."

"If these standards are what we care about, [then] let's grade people about whether or not they've met the standards... It's happening all over the country and I think that over time more and more places will do this and [it will become] less of a fad and more of a 'Let's grade people on whether they've met the assignment.'"

Ledford, however, warns that teaching to the test, as some call it, is damaging to a student's college preparation. "[Students] come in, and they're worse than ever since the move to high-stakes testing," he said. "The distortion that [testing] imposes on the curricular time in school has been to the student's detriment. They are memorization machines rather than critical thinkers. They think that learning is compiling facts to regurgitate, and I don't care about that. I care about being able to put two ideas together and analyze."

Similar to Griffith and Hutchings, Farrington noted that the ideal end point would be a system with no grades at all, though that is very difficult to achieve. "What if there were not grades at all? What would

happen?" Farrington said. "Some people would think the whole thing would totally fall apart and the only reason [students] have to [do work] is because they get a grade."

She blames the entrenched 100-year-old American school system, whose design -- the subject of her book "Failing at School: Lessons for Redesigning Urban High Schools" -- subjected some students to inherent failure. "We've inherited a structure and a system that's been around for over 100 years, and it was designed for a different purpose when only 5 percent kids went to high school and only 1.5 percent of kids graduated," Farrington said. Because the public was concerned with wasting taxpayer money, they encouraged a system that failed many students in the interest of giving only "the best and the brightest" a substantial education, she said. The rest could find decent jobs without a high school degree.

Many problems schools face today are linked to that history, she said. "We have the same system and same policies and practices... and what ends up happening is it really stratifies achievement," said Farrington. "The kids who do really well in school excel in that system, and then there's everybody else, and that could be 90 percent of the people and it ends up that that kids don't really learn well."

Davis shares that belief. She highlighted aspects of mastery-based learning in the elementary school that compel students to learn. Yet, motivating children at such a young age is simple. Students are "intrinsically motivated" because they want "to please," she said. "Because it's so creative, there's access for all levels of learners," said Davis.

"Nobody feels like they can't do it, because it's creative. Now, when you get into the standards, you do have to show mastery, and they're very motivated because of that."



Michael Sears

"They don't need points, they don't need grades," said Davis. "They're motivated by the process."

The change in grading requires a change in students' teachers' and administrators' mindsets, according to Glasner. Glasner's previous high school, where he was principal, did not employ mastery-based grading -- although it has a grading policy very similar to the middle school's new policy -- but some schools in the Urban Assembly conglomeration have made the change.

"I think it really requires a shift in thinking across the board," said Glasner. "The purpose of work across assessments is to demonstrate mastery. We're not doing it just to complete it but to learn it. It's evidence that we have mastered a learning perspective. If you don't do something you will still fail; an F is still an F."



## High School Teachers Weigh in on SMS Policy

Under the new SMS grading policy, students who do not submit an assignment earn a grade of 45 percent, while those who submit plagiarized work earn 55 percent. They must be asked to redo it and their parents contacted. If plagiarized work is resubmitted, it may be penalized no more than 30 percent. The current high school policy allows zeros for plagiarism.

"Part of my reasoning for taking [academic dishonesty] seriously is for the rest of students' academic careers, it will be taken seriously, and we would be doing a disservice if we didn't take it seriously," English Department Chairwoman **Elaine Mason** said.



Tony Cuda

"My basic philosophy is that the higher you raise the bar, the harder the students work," social studies teacher Tony Cuda said. "Obviously, I believe the opposite is true as well." Although Cuda acknowledges this is a general statement and there are exceptions, he cited instances when he set flexible deadlines versus concrete deadlines as evidence of its truth. He thinks teachers' policies should be similar, but should not be entirely uniform.



Roy Isaacs

While social studies teacher Roy Isaacs is OK with the concept of mastery-based grading — he believes students should have additional chances to understand the material — he doesn't think students should get credit for work they never completed or never made up. "It's a cheat to [students] and an insult to our profession," Isaacs said. He agrees with Cuda that students shouldn't receive 45 percent, as in the middle school policy, for doing no work.

Glasner said that two schools in the Urban Assembly, The Maker Academy and The UA Institute of Math and Science for Women use mastery-based grading. Established in fall 2014, The Maker Academy is founded on this grading philosophy. The school's website states that mastery-based grading enables the school to meet Common Core standards as well.

Meeting the Common Core curriculum standards while satisfying the requirements of being an MYP district and IB district mesh nicely in some areas but clash in others. John Moore, science teacher and the high school's IB MYP coordinator, believes that the IB curriculum enhances achievement under Common Core standards.

Part of being an MYP district mandates that Shaker add units of study each year, about two per annum, so "by 2017 every unit is going to be an MYP unit," said Moore. "Every unit is assessed with one of these rubrics. So it's part of any grading policy--this is a necessary part--because we're an MYP district, and so as we add more units, you're going to be seeing [the rubrics] more and more and more. The units that we currently have are being assessed with these rubrics and eventually that will be all eight or nine or 10 or however many units a teacher covers in a year times eight subjects, times grades 5-10, so that's a lot. And the idea is that everyone's used to these rubrics then. It becomes part of what we do.

"So what MYP has done is not necessarily content-based at all, but much more skills-based which make a nice connection with the Common Core," Moore said.

In other words, the IB rubrics articulate skills a student should master, whereas the Common Core standards state exactly what the student should know. For example, an IB MYP science rubric states that the student should be able to "explain scientific knowledge."

The teacher would then look at what students need to know under Common Core

**"We believe that while a district may have an overarching policy on grading, each teacher should be given some flexibility to make their own grading decisions to meet the needs and priorities of the students in the that class."**

**JOHN CHARLTON**

standards for that year -- properties of matter, for example. Expressed through the MYP rubric, that Common Core standard specifies that a student should be able to explain the properties of matter and why they are important, according to Moore.

Griffith said that the MYP rubrics are challenging to convert into letter grades, however. Because the MYP assessments were never intended to be converted to a 100 point scale, they are not as accurate as the initial grade once converted.

A committee comprising high school faculty and administration is collaborating to develop a standard grading policy for the high school, and, like the middle school's policy, it will address conversion of MYP grades to the traditional scale.

The district's effort to standardize grading is not mandated by the state, although use of Common Core standards is.

"The state of Ohio does encourage school districts to adopt curriculum that aligns with the new learning standards which include Common Core standards in English and math," said John Charlton, Ohio Department of Education's associate director of communications.

"We believe that while a district may have an overarching policy on grading, each teacher should be given some flexibility to make their own grading decision that again meet the needs and priorities of the students in that class," Charlton said.

Moore said that he thinks the MYP standards tie "beautifully with trying to push young people to deeper and deeper levels of thinking," and coupled with the Common Core State standards, will play a role in any grading policy in the high school. He thinks MYP pushes teachers to be creative. "I think it's all positive change. That way it can be revolutionary for our assessments."

Because rubrics are central to IB and MYP, they will become essential to grading policies and teachers' unit designs. According to Moore, the policies must be eas-

### On the Web

For more Shakerite coverage of grading policy changes, including the SMS policy on academic dishonesty and Campus and City Editor Sara Mesiano's look at Shaker's improved graduation rate, visit [www.shakerite.com](http://www.shakerite.com)

ily accessible for students online, handed out in class or posted on the wall.

"The goal behind this is that they say by the end of the unit, I am going to have to be able to explain this knowledge, here's what knowledge that is. And the rubric does that," he said.

As for the impact of the shift, Moore doesn't belittle the hardship on teachers. "It is so complex," Moore said. "It's throwing teachers through a loop . . . but change is not always bad."

According to Farrington, schools nationally are moving to mastery-based system to achieve greater success across the board.

According to Hutchings, the year before he came to Shaker schools, as director of pre-k through 12th grade initiatives in Alexandria City Public Schools, he worked on a committee to design mastery-based grading for the elementary schools. Shaker already had a similar program.

### Assessing Change

With only a quarter and a half of grading under the new middle school system, the policy's impact is unknown. The district's strategic plan outlines the timeline for changes to district grading policies. This year requires only the audit of policies in all buildings. By 2018, all buildings will employ a standardized grading policy. According to Hutchings, the process in each building will be a collaborative one.



# Global Travel Gives Students Unique Chances

EDITORIAL BOARD

Often, we take for granted the number of opportunities available at Shaker Heights High School. The new service trip to Cambodia, led by social studies teachers Amanda Ahrens and Michael Berger, is just one of Shaker's unique international travel options.

Shaker has three exchange programs with sister schools in foreign countries. At 35 years, the high school's Goslar exchange program is the longest-running exchange program between a German and American school. This summer,

about twenty students will travel to Germany to live with a host family in Goslar for two weeks and tour major German cities such as Berlin and Munich.

The school also maintains a relationship with the Lycée Gustave Flaubert in Rouen, France.

The French students have visited Shaker twice, with Shaker visiting once. "The idea is that we go every other year and they come on the alternate years," said French teacher Eileen Willis.

Too few students signed up for the trip this year, but Willis hopes the French students' visit next year will revive the program. The first year, about 13 students took the trip.

"Typically what we do is we spend a couple days in Paris, either at the beginning or end, depending on the calendar. Then we take a train to Rouen. Then they have about seven days of homestay with a family," said Willis. "During that time, we typically like them to have a full weekend with the family, so that they can integrate

and be separated from their American friends and the families are awesome. They take the kids great places."

Another opportunity to visit to Europe sends Shaker students to Worthing College in Worthing, Sussex. The English exchange program occurs in the summer.

Teachers also participate in international exchanges. This year English teacher Christopher Cotton is teaching at the Lycée Gustave Flaubert. In return, Helene Ame-line is teaching French at the high school.

Yet exchange programs are not Shaker's only international opportunities. The band tours various countries every three years, and the choir and orchestra travel abroad together every other year. These groups have traveled from China to Turkey to Austria.

On top of all this, the Asian Studies class, which meets Wednesdays from 7:30-9 p.m., plans on traveling to Japan this year. Shaker hosts Japanese students from our Takatori sister school every other year. The Asian Studies trip rotates between Japan, China and India.

The class usually visits Shaker's sister school in June before visiting Nara province, according to social studies teacher Andrew Glasier, who teaches Asian Studies with English teacher Jodi Podl. However, this year students will likely visit a different high school because of scheduling conflicts.

During the 18-day trip, in addition to visiting a Japanese high school, the class will visit "places like Hiroshima and Kyoto and then we end with Tokyo," Glasier said. Exact destinations remain mostly unknown, however.

This summer, the high school will add to its array of travel opportunities. Social

**"Traveling just gives you a sense of what everyone else is about, and takes the focus off your own personal problems."**

EILEEN WILLIS



The band students at a Bazaar on the trip to Turkey over 2013 spring break. Shaker bands are yet to announce the destination of the 2016 trip.

ISABEL ROTHMAN

studies teachers Amanda Ahrens and Brian Berger have teamed up with Rustic Pathways, a travel and service program organization, to create a service-based trip to Cambodia.

Adding another opportunity to travel internationally is beneficial and diversifying. Shaker has never offered a trip quite like this, which is a third to half service-based. The criteria is cemented in four main ideas: service, immersion, history of the genocide and ancient history.

Additionally, the Cambodia trip is open to all students, rather than restricted to one specific group. Ahrens preferred upperclassmen attendees, but remained open to all applicants, which lets the travelers branch meet classmates outside their peer-group.

Moreover, traveling to Cambodia -- a country thousands of miles from the U.S., with very different history, culture and problems -- will open teenagers' minds to the world beyond their doorstep.

"Traveling just gives you a sense of what everyone else is about, and takes the focus off your own personal problems," said Willis. "I've found that over and over again from my own experiences."

Glasier agreed, citing a summer he spent in Europe as a student.

"The opportunities are really amazing, and I don't think there's any better way to test yourself than traveling someplace that you're uncomfortable in," said Glasier. "It just helps you to define yourself. It helps you to grow as a human being."

We look forward to seeing what new and amazing travel opportunities, from Cambodia onwards, Shaker Heights High School will continue to offer.



# Time For Change

## High school should start later to match teenagers' body clocks

ALEXANDRA HARRIS AND ELLA SHLONSKY OPINION EDITORS

**W**e are all trying to be Hermione Granger, without the time turner. We take on six or seven classes, each with hours of homework and throw ourselves into crazy numbers of extracurriculars. There is just not enough time and something has got to give. Usually, this something is sleep.

High school students share three realities during the school year: overwhelming amounts of homework, time-consuming extracurriculars and, most importantly, sleep deprivation.

This issue's prevalence has grown not only in high schools, but also in the psychiatric and journalistic fields.

The National Sleep Foundation estimated that teenagers need at least nine and half hours of sleep per night. So imagine their dismay when their 2014 survey revealed that less than half of American children get at least nine hours of sleep each night, and 58 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds typically sleep fewer than seven hours.

But we high schoolers already knew that. We live it every day.

"We have so much work to do that we're just up late," said sophomore Mathieu Girard, who takes both Advanced Placement Biology and Advanced Placement U.S. History. "So at the end of the day we're just really tired, but we still have work to do, so we end up going to sleep at like two o'clock in the morning."

From there it's a downward spiral. Advanced Placement Psychology teacher Sylvia Sheppard thinks that students' lack of sleep takes a toll on their learning.

"When you're tired, your body goes into a mode where it wants to fix whatever it's lacking. So if you're hungry during school, you're not actually thinking about what's going on in the classroom, you're thinking about your next meal. Same thing goes for sleep," Sheppard explained.

"If you're that tired, either you're half-out in class, trying to get rid of that need for sleep, or you're planning when you're going to sleep. Can I go home? Can I take a nap? And that becomes the preoccupation, therefore, you're not paying attention in class to what you need."

"Students who stay up to study, that's not beneficial either," said Sheppard. "It's

### By the Numbers

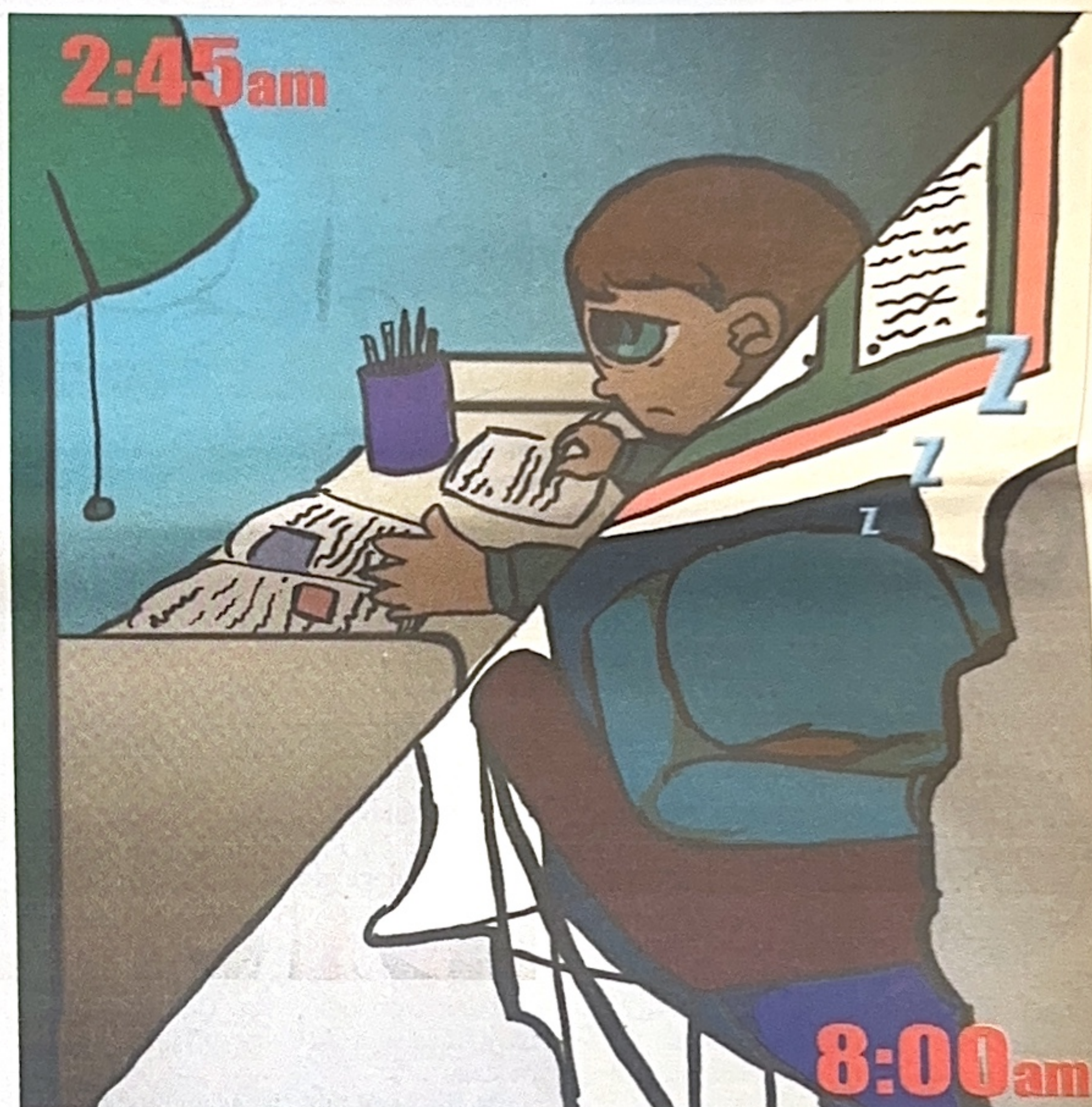
According to the National Sleep Foundation, adolescents reported the following average amounts of sleep on school nights.

9th grade  
7.6 hours

10th grade  
7.3 hours

11th grade  
7 hours

12th grade  
6.9 hours



CHARNA KATZ/THE SHAKERITE

better to get a good night's sleep in order to perform well in school than on a test, than it is to cram until really late into the night."

Still, many students choose to stay up for that extra hour or two at night. But going to bed late makes students tired at school, causing them to fall asleep in class.

"There are students who frequently fall asleep in class, and it's not that they're just being rude and putting their heads down, it's that they can't keep their eyes open. So yes, I do think [lack of sleep] is an issue," said Sheppard. "I do see students compensating. A lot more students carrying around coffee."

However, as much as lack of sleep is a teenagers' choice of homework over sleep, their bodies also play a role. Adolescents' body clocks are by nature wired differently

than those of adults and younger children.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, teens will usually not feel sleepy until 10 p.m. or later, no matter how much homework they have.

By nature we are night people, but we are forced to act as morning people.

"As we mature and go into the teenage years, the natural tendency is the body's internal clock, which is usually set for a little bit longer than a 24-hour day. So there's a tendency to not get sleepy until later into the night and then want to sleep in later into the morning," said Metrohealth physician Dennis Auckley, Associate Director of the Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine.

"Not all kids do that, but it's the average trend, and it becomes a problem when



they have to get up early and get to school on time. They may have difficulty falling asleep at night because their brain and their body are still awake.

"Because you need to get to bed earlier, it can be very hard, because your own natural tendency is not going to allow you to do that," said Auckley.

"The result of that is that they're having trouble falling asleep early enough at night, and they have to get up earlier than what their internal clock wants them to. So they develop a lack of sleep, or what we call a chronic partial sleep deprivation," said Auckley. "That can have significant effects on their mood and level of alertness, which can translate into problems with school and behavior, and also even potentially performance in school."

At first, high schoolers' lack of sleep affecting their learning abilities was a mounting issue. Then it became a real problem. Now it's a genuine concern.

It all began in 1999 with Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, who posed the "ZZZ's to A" act. It encouraged school districts all over the country to move their start times to no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

Her hard work to pass this bill has continued through the past 15 years. She is now working with the National Sleep Foundation to supply her argument with realistic statistics about this problem.

But what would Lofgren's bill look like in action?

A study by Dr. Kyla Wahlstrom at the University of Minnesota suggested that pushing back school start times would help students both academically and mentally. Based on her research, the Minneapolis Public School District pushed back their starting times of seven high schools from 7:15 a.m. to 8:40 a.m., and the results were very encouraging.

Dr. Wahlstrom found that students gained at least five extra hours of sleep per week, and saw an improvement in attendance and enrollment rates, increased daytime alertness and decreased student-reported depression.

However, we must also acknowledge the disadvantages of this change.

We will not pretend that instituting a later start time for the high school would be easy, but our health, in the short and long term, matters most. The well-being of the high school's student body is at stake.

"I think the understanding of [starting school later] is sound enough that I think it makes sense, and there is some data supporting it. It's not universal if you look at the whole body of literature, not everything is saying there's a clear connection, but I think there's enough information out there to suggest that it probably is important," said Auckley.

"The flipside to that is that it really has to be a cultural change, because you have to balance making this change. What's going to happen with extracurricular activi-

ties, sporting activities, busing and parents who have to bring their kids to school and pick them up?

"So it really has to be well thought out. I think from the standpoint of a sleep physician, it would be a good idea to make that change, but it's a hill you've got to climb."

Sheppard agrees that late start would be helpful in theory. However, she knows that teenagers are creatures of habit, and will only fall back into the same repetitive cycle.

"I don't know if making school later is going to necessarily help students actually get more sleep. I think on Tuesdays some students sleep in, but a lot of them are already here and studying," Sheppard explained.

"Teenagers should get somewhere between eight and 10 hours a night of sleep, and they're probably getting around six and compensating during the day.



CHARNA KATZ/THE SHAKERITE

**"There are students who frequently fall asleep in class, and it's not that they're just being rude and putting their heads down, it's that they can't keep their eyes open."**

SYLVIA SHEPPARD

"The key would be that you actually do sleep eight to ten hours, and not just start school later and still deprive yourself of sleep," said Sheppard. "You still stay up until three in the morning, whether you're playing video games or doing homework."

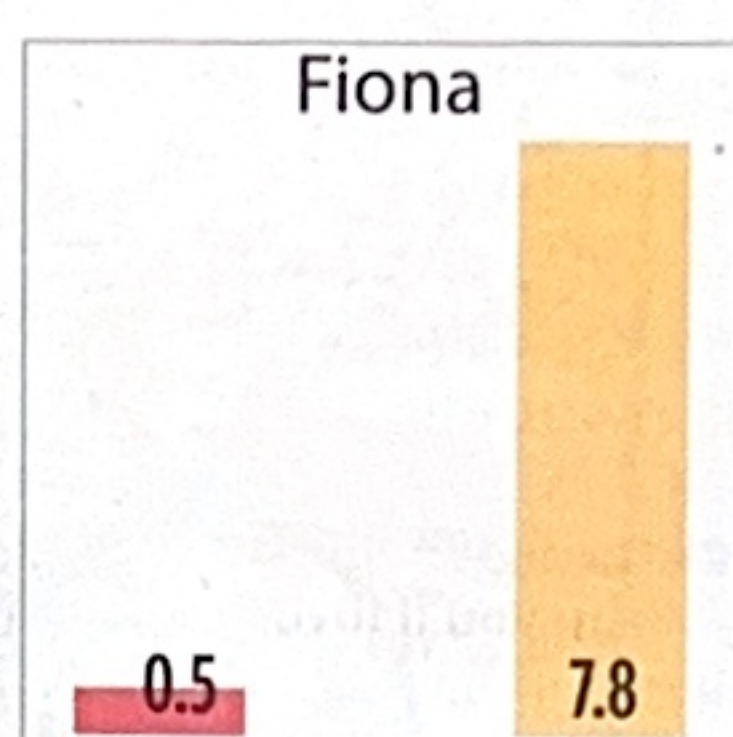
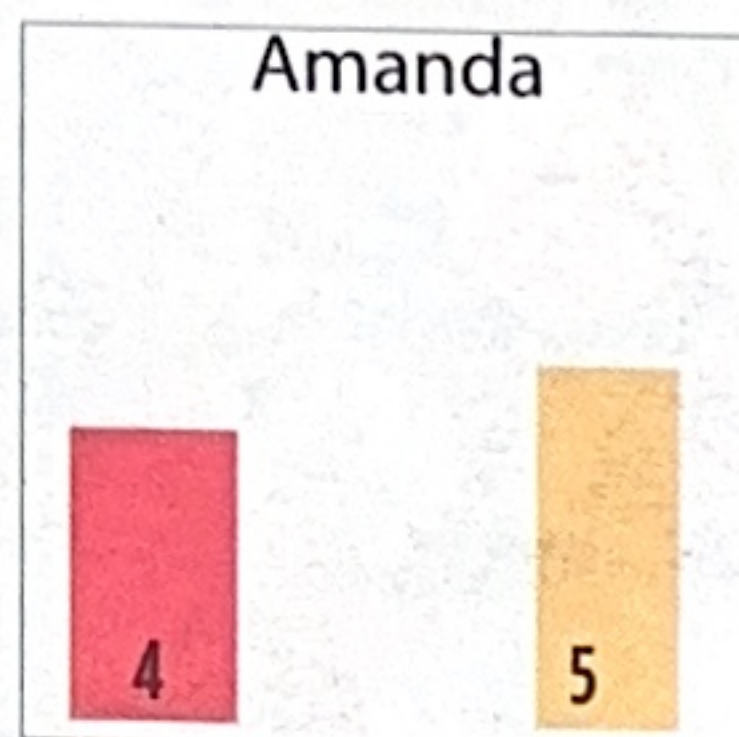
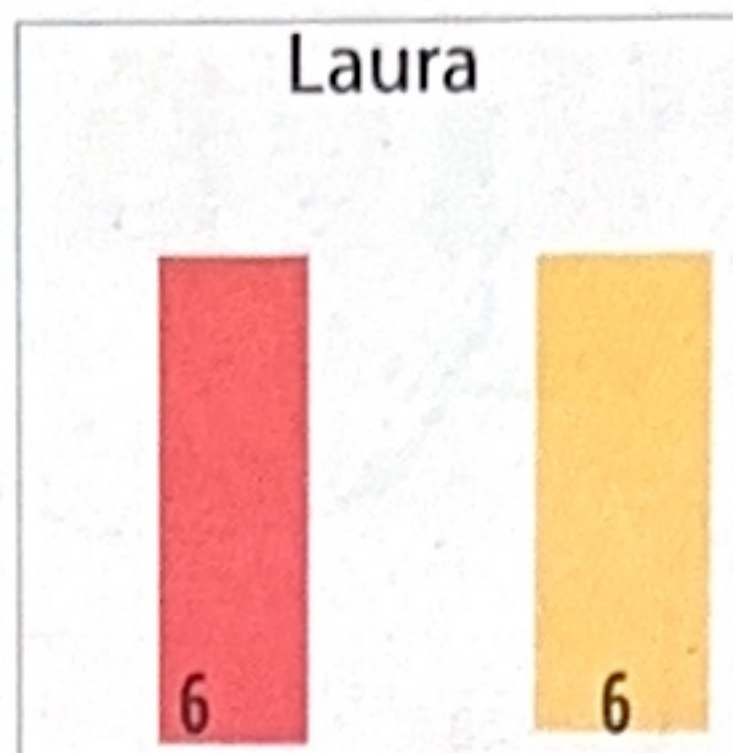
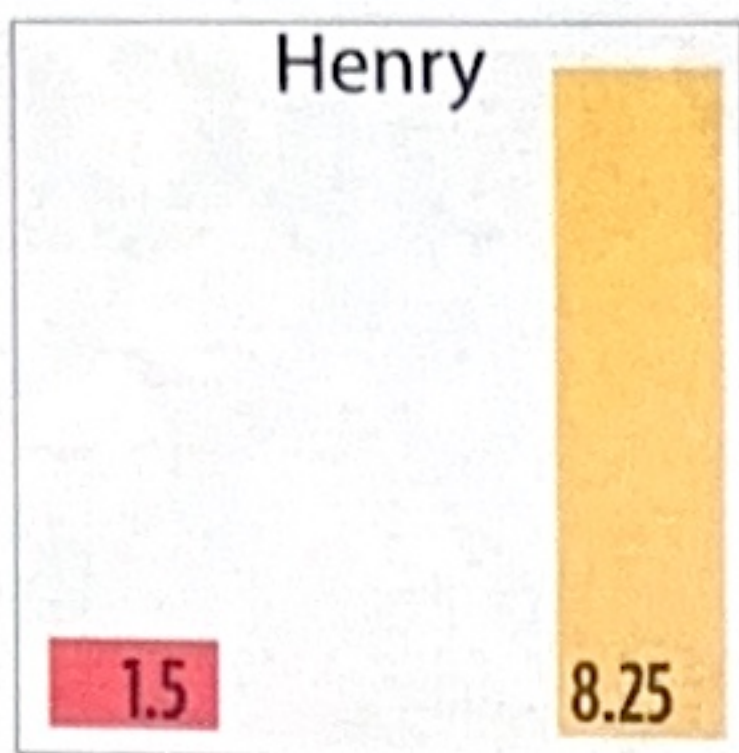
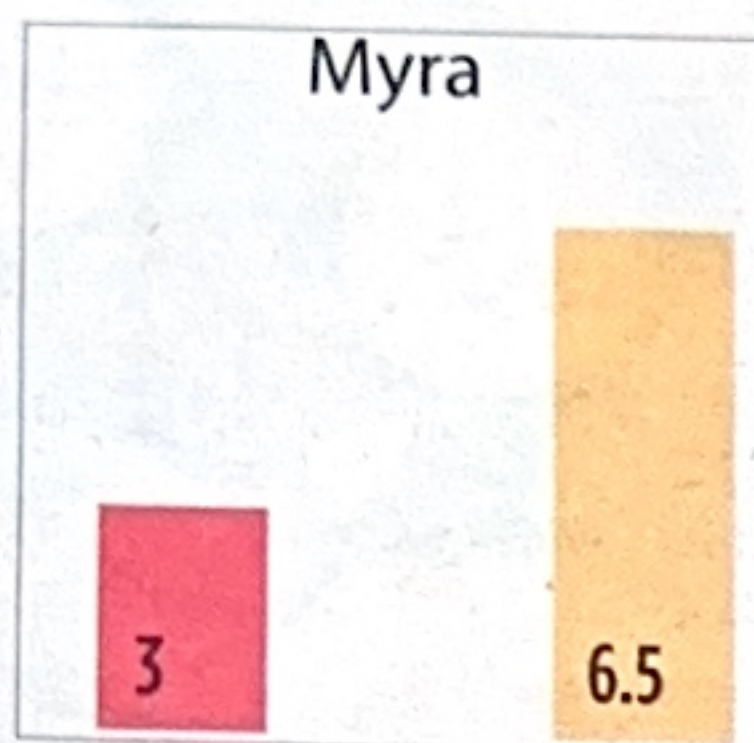
Auckley and Sheppard are both right. Not only would changing school start times require re-working the schedule, it would also cause logistical problems in the community.

All or nearly all schools in the area end their school days around three p.m. If Shaker pushed back the school day, coordinating after-school activities with other schools would be harder. Specifically, sports. As is, athletes already miss class time for games.

"Falling asleep in class becomes a big issue. I feel like it impedes learning and also development as a student," said senior athlete Arpit Agrawal. "Especially as a student



# How Much Sleep are Students Really Getting?



We asked students who kept homework logs for the last issue to continue recording information about their homework tendencies. For this issue, we specifically looked at how many hours they spend on homework nightly and how many hours of sleep they typically get nightly. All of these students participate in other activities that also take time away from homework and sleep.

Average time student spent on homework nightly (hours)

Average time student slept nightly (hours)

MARIEL LUSTIG//THE SHAKERITE

athlete, it takes a toll."

Additionally, if the high school offered bus service for its students, we would have one less hurdle to clear. The district would not have to worry about the logistics of altering the bus system to different start times, because for the high school, there isn't one. However, the bus schedule would have to be considered if later starts were implemented throughout the entire district.

A constant fight rages between what we have done in the past, and what we should change today.

We live in a society where our health is an increasingly popular subject. We have begun to move towards healthier foods and greater exercise, so it's only a matter of time before we implement improvements in our sleep habits.

"[Lack of sleep] has a great impact on mental health. Again, with the way that teenagers' brains work, the emotional part of their brain is starting to develop faster than their frontal lobe, which is their judgement. When you're tired, you become very emotional. You will overreact to things that should be benign. You think that they're much bigger," Sheppard said.

"It can even get to the point that if you're

so sleep deprived you can hallucinate. It's the type of hallucination where you're not sure if you're dreaming something or if it really happened," said Sheppard. "You're not sure what's real or not real. It can definitely impact mental health and your perceptions and how you respond to events with your emotions."

Along with emotions running high, those who experience what Auckley calls "a chronic partial sleep deprivation" are prone to physical health issues as well.

"[There are studies that bring] normal people in who typically sleep eight hours a night, and then restrict them and their sleep, say six or four hours a night, and then study them and see what happens to them after a week," Auckley said.

"We start to notice some changes. The most pronounced ones being that there's changes in certain hormones in the body that affect appetite, specifically cravings for certain types of food, particularly unhealthy food," said Auckley. "So there's a pretty good understanding in associating a chronic partial lack of sleep with weight gain and leading to obesity."

"We're seeing that starting at a younger age, and that can translate, as well as by some other pathways, into earlier onset

**Adolescents' body clocks are by nature wired differently than those of adults and younger children. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, teens will usually not feel sleepy until 10 p.m. or later, no matter how much homework they have.**

of some adult disease, which we usually didn't see previously in kids," said Auckley. "Adult onset diabetes, blood pressure problems, and even sleep apnea. Obviously weight gain is a complex phenomenon, and has more to do with just sleep ... but the lack of sleep is probably a factor that's important in the overall equation, and can be part of the pathway leading to these other problems."

High schools have started at the same early times for years, and older generations have yet to show signs of those start times' "long term effects." However, Auckley thinks it's possible.

"Since the field's fairly new, we haven't had enough time to study teenagers and track forward to see what happens twenty years later. But it's very likely that it would hold true," Auckley said.

Whether or not that would be enough to change school start times once and for all remains unclear.

The bottom line is, teenagers' mental, emotional and physical health are being put at risk. We're reaching a point in history where students' performance on tests is considered more important than their quality of life. Late starts or not, something has to change.

Opinion

## How Much is Too Much?

American students need to take as much homework as they did in 1982, and the burden is taking a toll.

Next Year's Homework Is Studying Your Homework

H

Opinion

## With Homework to Spare, School Invades Students' Summers

What Classes Assign Homework Over the Summer?

Opinion

Opinion

## Enjoying Life? Yeah, Right. With Homework, Not Likely

H



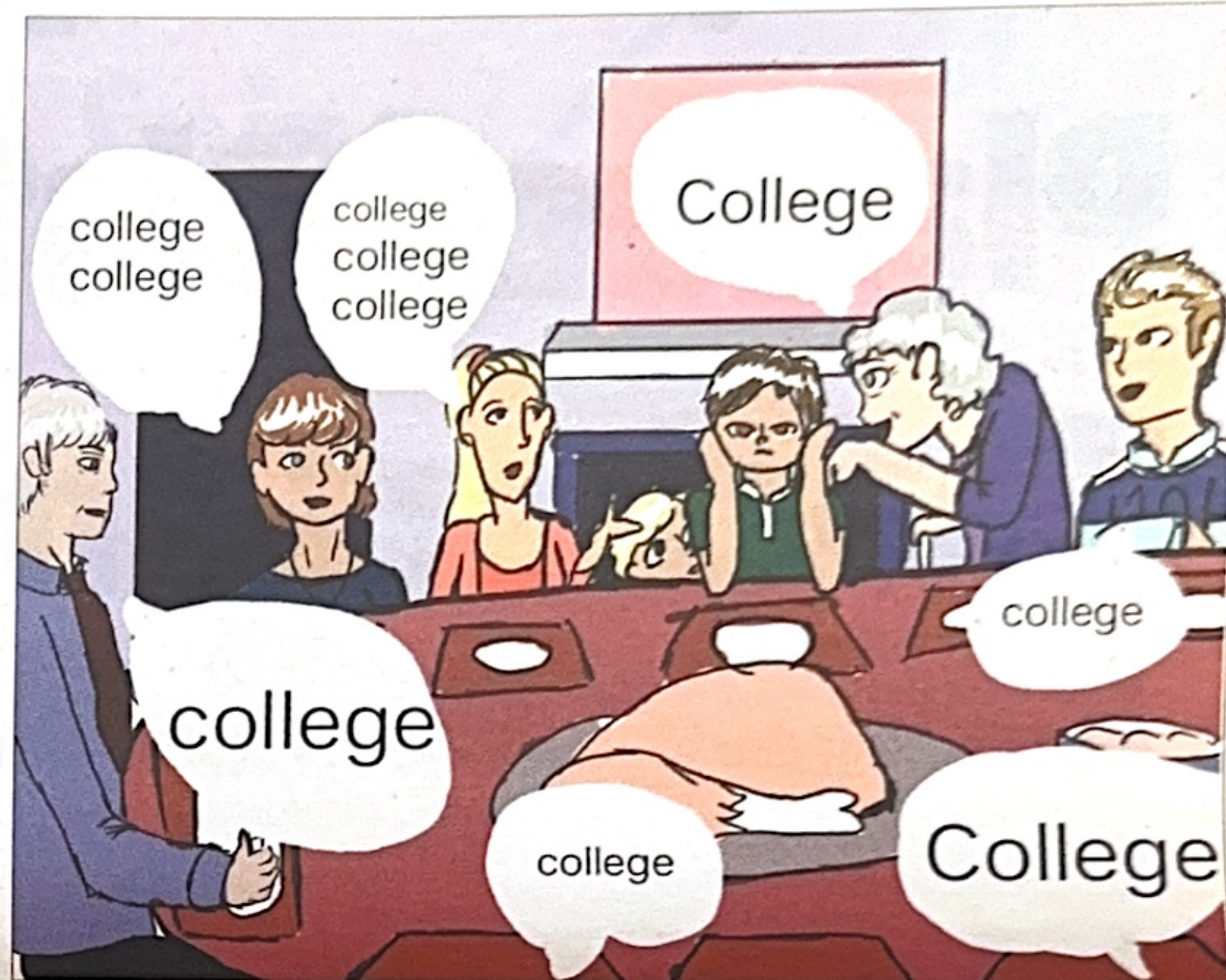
# How to Survive Winter Break

With 16 days of vacation and crazy, distant relatives looming, The Shakerite offers strategies for maintaining your sanity and maximizing your time in front of the TV

ALEXANDRA HARRIS AND ELLA SHLONSKY OPINION EDITORS

## Avoiding Family Time? Here Are 7 Shows to Binge-Watch Over Break

1. **"Parks and Recreation."** A hilarious look into government work that doesn't make Sarah Palin the butt of every joke. As Aziz Ansari's character Tom Haverford would say, "treat yoself" to watching this show all break.
2. **"Gilmore Girls."** You will fall in love with the entertaining world of Stars Hollow and become alarmingly attached to Lorelai and Rory Gilmore's (Lauren Graham and Alexis Bledel) mother-daughter relationship. Choose your favorite boyfriends wisely.
3. **"House of Cards."** A cynical take on U.S. politics featuring Kevin Spacey as Frank Underwood, a smooth-talking congressman who you'll love and hate at the same time. And remember, there is only one rule in politics: hunt or be hunted.
4. **"Scandal."** You will not sleep. You will not eat. You will not do anything but lay in bed and watch this show. Also, you will develop a strange urge to wear all white and sip red wine while you plan your enemy's demise.
5. **"Friends."** If you have not yet seen this show, you have not lived. There's a reason it aired for 10 seasons. Your bed will soon become the iconic orange couch at Central Perk. If anyone asks why you spent all of your time watching "Friends" instead of doing homework, just say, "We were on a break!"
6. **"The West Wing."** Watch professional politicians do what they do best in yet another interpretation on U.S. government, this one more idealistic. By the end of winter break, you'll have mastered the art of the "walk and talk."
7. **"Arrested Development."** An underrated sitcom that will make you wish you belonged to the dysfunctional, but hilarious, Bluth family. Bonus: you get to see Michael Cera live out his awkward tween years on camera. Does it get much better than that?



## Creative Replies To Endless Questions About Your Future

1. Great question. Let me get back to you in 10 years.
2. That's future (your name's) problem.
3. I don't know. Why don't you tell me?
4. Oh, look over there! (Run away)
5. Hahahaha... (silence)
6. Let me consult my magic crystal ball.
7. I'm starting my job holding a sign on the side of the road next week, so I'll let you know how that goes.

## With So Many Meanings, 'Yeet' Embodies Linguistic Spirit

A perplexing and abused neologism has infiltrated Shaker students' vocabulary. "Yeet."

Perhaps Vine is to thank, or to blame, for this invasive term. The social media network, consisting of six-second clips, was the platform that debuted yeet in the spring of 2014.

It started as a dance craze that first appeared in Viner Maleek's six-second video with a caption "yeet." It features popular Viner Lil Terio doing a dance in the middle of a driveway. After it was posted, fellow Viner Lil Meatball responded with his now-infamous video, in which he simultaneously fired a nonexistent rifle and grooved while his friends chanted "Ya yeet ya!"

Within weeks, yeet developed from a meaningless chant to a complicated, layered word, with so many interpretations that its true definition is unknown. Now, it lurks around every corner -- in classrooms, in households and on every social media known to mankind.

For a short time, there appeared to be a clear definition of what yeet really meant. It seemed that every time someone said something foolish, a bystander would laugh and say, "Yeet!"

The exclamation's insulting message was usually punctuated with a "neck," a slap to the neck delivered as a punishment for stupidity.



Emily Montenegro  
Staff Reporter

That negative connotation contrasts yeet's cheerier debut on Vine. Now, the word's opposing definitions have flummoxed Shaker Heights High School as students choose their own interpretations.

Sophomore Rekarra King said yeet is "an eclectic dance of the native African Americans of the 21 century."



Lily Roth  
Staff Reporter

Isaiah Redmond, also a sophomore, knows yeet's entire history. "Urban American rappers freestyled to the beat and made a hit dance song, 'The Yeet.'" Redmond said that yeet's meaning is equivalent to "no," but only one has a dance to go with it. This dance, the 'nae nae,' involves swaying to and fro while swiveling hips and raising a hand above the head. One is usually surrounded by an audience chanting, "Hoowah!"

However, some people don't correlate yeet with modern dance. Junior Max Markey said yeet is "like 'Woo!' or 'Cool!'" Here lies the source of yeet confusion: the numerous definitions.

"I think it has something to do with getting away from someone," senior Ceci Kubu said. Her

definition is unique -- and a bit disturbing. While some students chant "Yeet" while dancing, others use yeet to escape conversations.

Even the unofficial, yet often accurate, definitions from Urban Dictionary are scattered. One description is "a term used to express excitement," which vaguely agrees with some students' definitions. Another calls yeet "a term similar to 'alright,'" which completely contradicts the other interpretations.

However, yeet has a sense of patriotism. It's one of the most free-spirited words in the unofficial English language. The lack of a rigid definition sparks some magic with the word.

"It can really mean anything," summarized Margi Weiss, a junior.

Markey agreed, "It really means whatever you want it to."

Yeet's infinite conceptions leave open endless possibilities. Whether it's chanted while dancing or exclaimed for no reason, yeet will evidently remain present in students' vocabularies until a true definition is found. Considering neck has remained for nearly two years now, yeet will most likely stay for a long, long time.

Remember, students: with a great number of options comes great responsibility. Think before you yeet!



# Inexplicably Slow Internet Plagues District, Vexes Teachers and Students

New technology director investigates why network is performing so poorly this school year compared to previous years

JOHN VODREY WEB MANAGING EDITOR

John Rizzo, the district's first-year director of technology and media services, is just as frustrated with this year's poor Internet service as students and teachers are. When asked during an interview if a photographer could take pictures of him, Rizzo quipped, "What, of me pulling my hair out?" Teachers expressed concern about the Internet speed in previous school years when Rizzo was hired in July, and have since told him and his team of technicians that the network has been unusually slow this year.

"We definitely have an overall slowness issue" across the whole district, Rizzo said. "Nothing has changed drastically this year internally infrastructure-wise or anything. We've added more devices, but that shouldn't really account for this drastic of a drop."

"When we go to the computer lab to do assignments, the Internet is always slow, if not totally shut off," Freshman Char Ray Washington said. "It's annoying and frustrating because then you have to go home and finish all the homework you couldn't do in class. It adds more to my list of things to do at home and makes me more stressed out."

Rizzo said he's "trying to nail down, where's our bottleneck?" A bottleneck is a point that impedes traffic flow and causes congestion. The first place he plans to look is the district's web filter, which blocks students from accessing websites deemed inappropriate for school. "Everything that goes between us and the Internet goes through that filter, so if there's something in there that's not acting quite right, then that could be a point of con-

tention, that could be a bottleneck," he said. Rizzo has asked the district's Internet provider, North Coast Council, to monitor the district's circuit for any problems. Additionally, he has hired a consulting firm to audit the district's network as a whole. At press time, the audit hadn't been finished. "I think once I get some better knowledge of what we have here [from the audit], we should be able to make some moves," Rizzo said.

While Rizzo's waiting for the audit, teachers and staff members are finding slow Internet irksome. "We realize that the district is trying to improve technology and we sympathize with that," Shaker Heights Teachers' Association President and English teacher John Morris said. However, Morris emphasized that the poor Internet performance is adversely affecting teachers' "day-to-day business" in the interim.

"I have to plan on it buffering. Sometimes the students have trouble saving things because they can't access web lockers. In this setting you need to have multiple places to save your work, just in case the others don't work," librarian Patricia Lawrence said. "When I work, I open multiple tabs so while one tab is loading I can work on something else."

The highest download speed that the district can receive from NCC, which is a consortium of local school districts, is 150 megabytes per second. The high school, which is the "head end" for the district, is connected to NCC by a fiber optic cable. All of the district's other buildings have fiber optic cables between them and the high school. The connection between the schools can be as fast as one gigabyte — or 1,000 megabytes — per second, and allows files to be shared in storage servers that aren't connected to the internet.

Fiber optic cables send information by



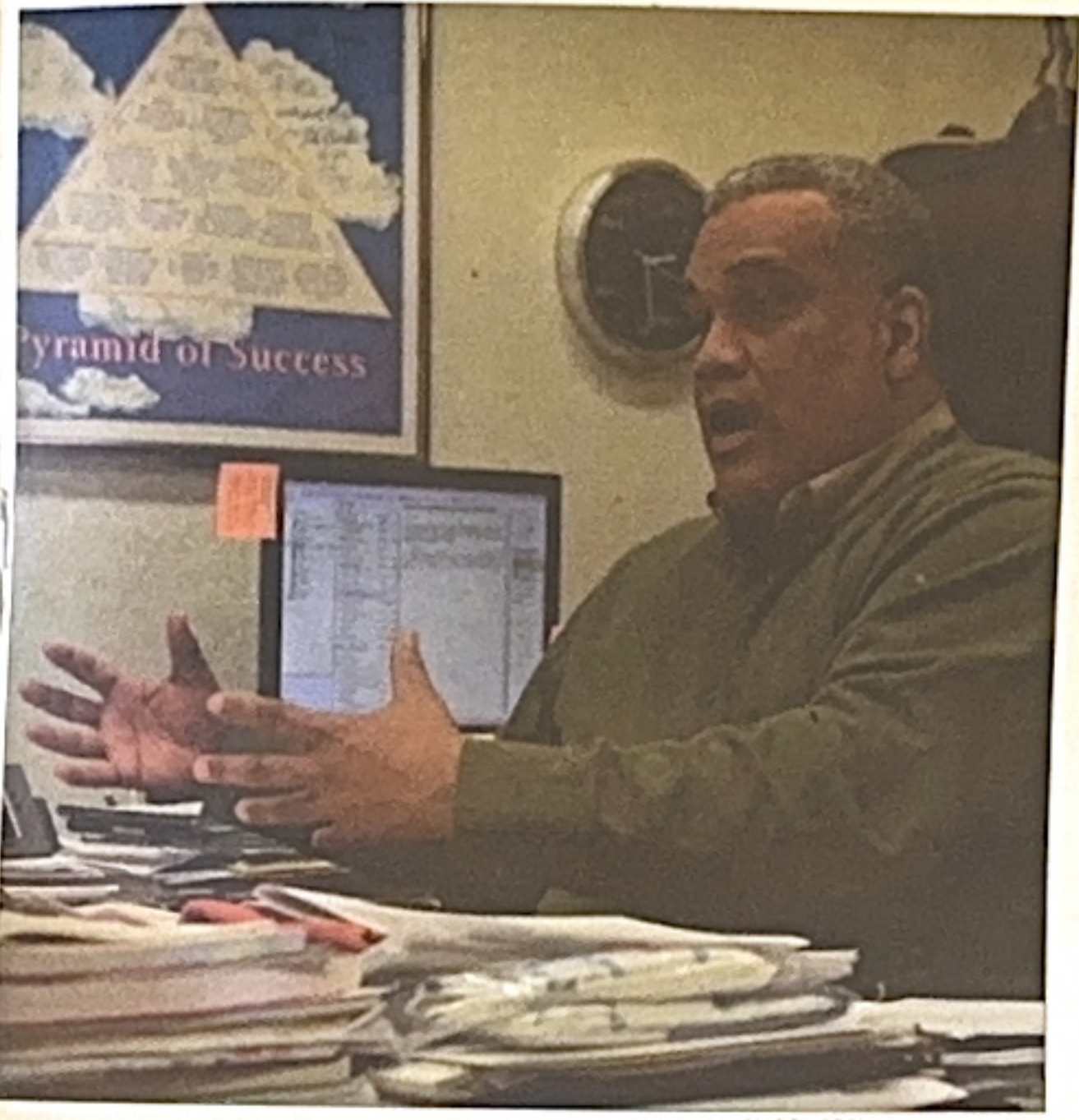
Technology Director John Rizzo said the district is "in a little bit of a catch up in terms of figuring out where's our best provider, where's our best money investment."

**"We definitely have an overall slowness issue."**

JOHN RIZZO

transmitting light through strands of glass or plastic fiber about as thick as a human hair. AT&T provides these cables, which are a combination of aerial — strung onto telephone lines — and buried.

Mayfield City School District, where Rizzo previously worked, is also connected through NCC, and according to Rizzo gets "good service." Even though Rizzo said he doesn't think the issue lies with NCC or AT&T, he is considering upgrading to a one-gigabyte connection, though probably not this school year. "I know of districts that have gone up to a gig, and that is something that I want to strongly look at," he said.



Principal Michael Griffith said he believes the network might be overburdened with too many internet-connected devices and that the school needs to look into whether the network has the "capacity to manage all of the things that we're asking it to do."

However, Rizzo cautioned, "You can increase your outside Internet connectivity, but if you have something inherently slowing you down within your network, you're not going to realize much of a benefit, if anything."

As to whether the district will stick with NCC if it eventually upgrades its speed, Rizzo said, "I'm not opposed to looking at options ever. I'll certainly talk to them and I'll certainly talk to other people as well." Rizzo said NCC's "service has always been good, and they've always been very responsive." The district has a one-year contract with NCC, which also hosts non-Internet services such as ProgressBook and financial accounting programs, that expires in June. The district could keep receiving these services even if it decided to stop purchasing Internet from NCC.

According to its website, NCC, which is based in Valley View, is a member of the Ohio Education Computer Network and is "the premier service provider of emerging and evolving technologies in northern Ohio." Per OECN's website, the Ohio Legislature created OECN in 1979 and it currently comprises 21 information technology centers similar to NCC across the state.

District Treasurer Bryan Christman said the district pays NCC about \$26,000 per year for Internet service and that he thinks purchasing Internet from a company like Time Warner Cable or AT&T would almost surely be more expensive than from NCC. He said he believes most public schools in Ohio get their internet from an ITC because of the discounted pricing they offer.

Christman said he couldn't recall ever being asked by the district's technology director to look into how much it would cost to switch to a private Internet provider. Christman started as treasurer in 1999. Rizzo's predecessor, Kathy Fredrick, started in 2001 and re-

tired in June.

"We're in a little bit of a catch-up in terms of figuring out where's our best provider, where's our best money investment in terms of getting up to snuff so that you can serve up videos without going to sleep before it starts to play," Rizzo said.

Rizzo said he doesn't have any average internet speed figures for any of the schools or the district as a whole for this year or previous years, but that it's clear that this year there has been a marked drop in speed.

"Our school's Internet is extremely slow," said junior Lauren Holloway. "Once I had to take an online test, and many of us couldn't finish because of Internet issues as well as bad software. It also slows down the work we have to do. It upsets many teachers as well as students."


Sophomore Elise LaFramboise concurred. "A lot of the time when we do assignments on the computers for classes like biology, nobody finishes because the Internet is too slow or just not working," she said.

One reason for the slowdown might be increased video consumption. "Streaming video is now a huge part of education. It has a very legitimate use, but it comes with a huge overhead in terms of bandwidth consumption," Rizzo said.

Principal Michael Griffith sees a greater number of devices as a burden on the network. "I guess what my feeling is what is going on is we need to review our current network, the structure, make sure that its signal or architecture has the capacity to manage all of the things that we're asking it to do," he said.

Griffith continued, "You've got document cameras, Smartboards, Internet everywhere and wireless everywhere, and people are having all these other toys and tools and software. You've got more COWs [computers on wheels]


## Bad Spins




**Lauren Holloway, junior:**  
"Once I had to take an online test and many of us couldn't finish because of internet issues as well as bad software. It also slows down the work we have to do. It upsets many teachers as well as students."



**Jim Bates, sophomore:**  
Sometimes students can't even use Google to look things up [due to internet outages]. The teachers use [the internet] as a teaching tool to help and teach students and use programs like Mastering Biology and Moodle."




**Halle Bauer, English teacher:**  
"I've been fortunate in that every time the internet has gone down I have not needed it directly for a lesson, but I was bummed out when I had a lesson planned out for my Human Rights class where they were going to go watch testimonies of Holocaust survivors in the computer lab, and then all of the videos were blocked by 'Safety Mode,' and then by the time we unblocked them, they loaded too slowly to watch."



**Elise LaFramboise, sophomore:**  
"A lot of the time when we do assignments on the computers for classes like biology, nobody finishes because the internet is too slow or just not working. In biology we had a long lab activity to do. I had to finish it at home, which was time-consuming, difficult and annoying."



**Brian Berger, social studies teacher:**  
"Days that you think you can use technology during lessons it doesn't work. Then you have to think quickly and move to a Plan B, which sometimes I don't even have prepared. It just happens too often."



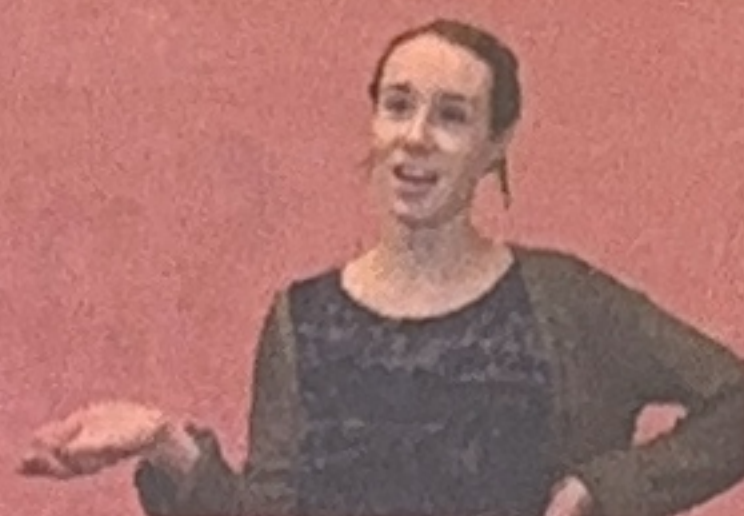
**Gabe Duncan, freshman:**  
"I mainly use the internet to check ProgressBook, so when it's [the internet] not up, it's really inconvenient, and sometimes can even hurt my grade. By that I mean, how am I supposed to know how to bring a grade up if I can't see what's missing or what I got a bad grade on?"





James Schmidt, science teacher:

"The biggest problem has been the accessibility to printing services for handouts, worksheets, practice problems, tests and labs for the kids. It becomes difficult to get everything ready when I can't print when we need to. I've definitely had to make backup lesson plans... I would try and print something in the morning and things weren't ready or it took too long."



Maeve Cook, senior:

"I have been at home sometimes and not been able to print something for school, say we're out of ink or something, then I go to school to print it, but I cannot because I can't get anything to load, and sometimes the printers are down! Then I get in trouble for not having my assignments finished, which is very frustrating. It's not my fault the internet is down. I hope it can get fixed, it could potentially hurt my assignments."



Valerie Doerson, English teacher:

"There are times where I have to change my lesson plans entirely... There have been times when I haven't been able to respond to parent, which isn't lesson-planning, but it's still a pain. There's been times when my students can't access Moodle, which is really really important because I use it a lot."

PETER O'NEILL/THE SHAKERITE

rolling around. So we're adding, whether or not the structure is designed in a way to make it more efficient."

Rizzo said the district has "some pretty old machines out in service, which are not helping the situation." However, he said he doesn't believe old computers are the primary problem. "A lot of people, I know, are down on it right now, but you guys have a lot of really good stuff still. I mean, it truly is [good stuff]. It's just not functioning at peak, and I need to get it there for sure."

"I'm hoping there are some things we can do more immediately [than upgrading hardware] so that we can at least get back to where we used to be, which wasn't great, but at least it was better than where we are now," Rizzo said.

Adding insult to injury, Internet service stopped functioning completely at the high school, and by extension, the whole district, on six days, approximately twice each day between Oct. 14 and Oct. 28 due to a broken fiber optic cable at the high school. Rizzo's four-person team struggled to diagnose the

problem. Once it had, technicians replaced the cable with a substitute cable they had on hand, which they later discovered had the wrong diameter.

Anticipating outages, teachers whose plans rely on the Internet have begun to create two sets of lesson plans for themselves or for their substitute teachers — one for working Internet, one for an Internet outage.

"It causes us to have a Plan B. We can't always use our Plan A, which is the best," Spanish teacher Melissa Albrecht said.

"Days that you think you can use technology during lessons, it doesn't work. Then you have to think quickly and move to a Plan B, which sometimes I don't even have prepared. Like sometimes you have to take your class to the library for a lesson, or to work on a project, and the Internet is down," said social studies teacher Brian Berger. "It defeats the whole purpose of going to the library. It just happens too often."

Students are also frustrated.

"I have been at home sometimes and not

**"It [the Internet problem] causes us to have a Plan B. We can't always use our Plan A, which is the best."**

MELISSA ALBRECHT

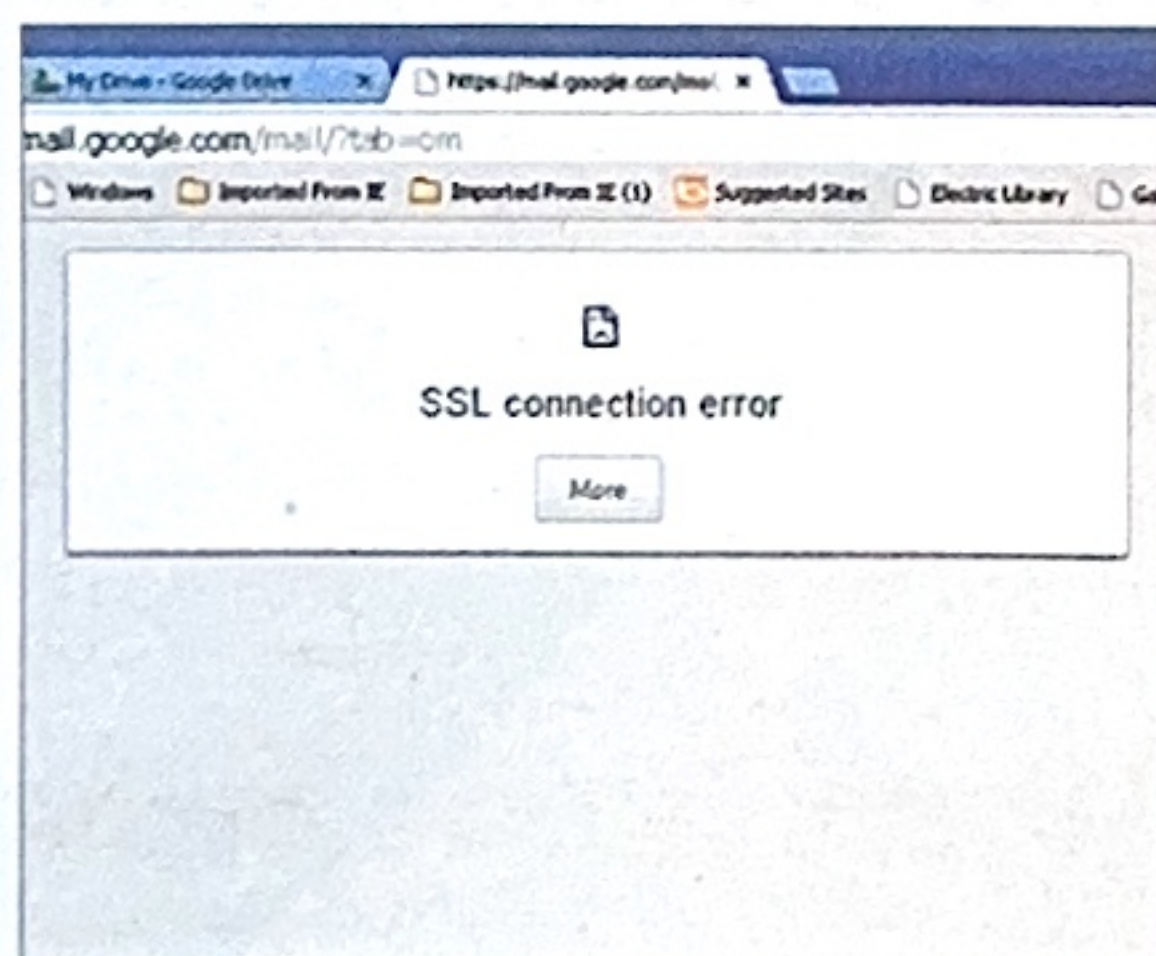
been able to print something for school -- say we're out of ink or something -- then I go to school to print it, but I cannot because I can't get anything to load, and sometimes the printers are down," said senior Maeve Cook. "Then I get in trouble for not having my assignments finished, which is very frustrating. It's not my fault the Internet is down. I hope it can get fixed -- it could potentially hurt my assignments."

"I mainly use the internet to check ProgressBook, so when it's [the Internet] not up, it's really inconvenient, and sometimes can even hurt my grade," said freshman Gabe Dacanay. "By that I mean, how am I supposed to know how to bring a grade up if I can't see what's missing or what I got a bad grade on?"

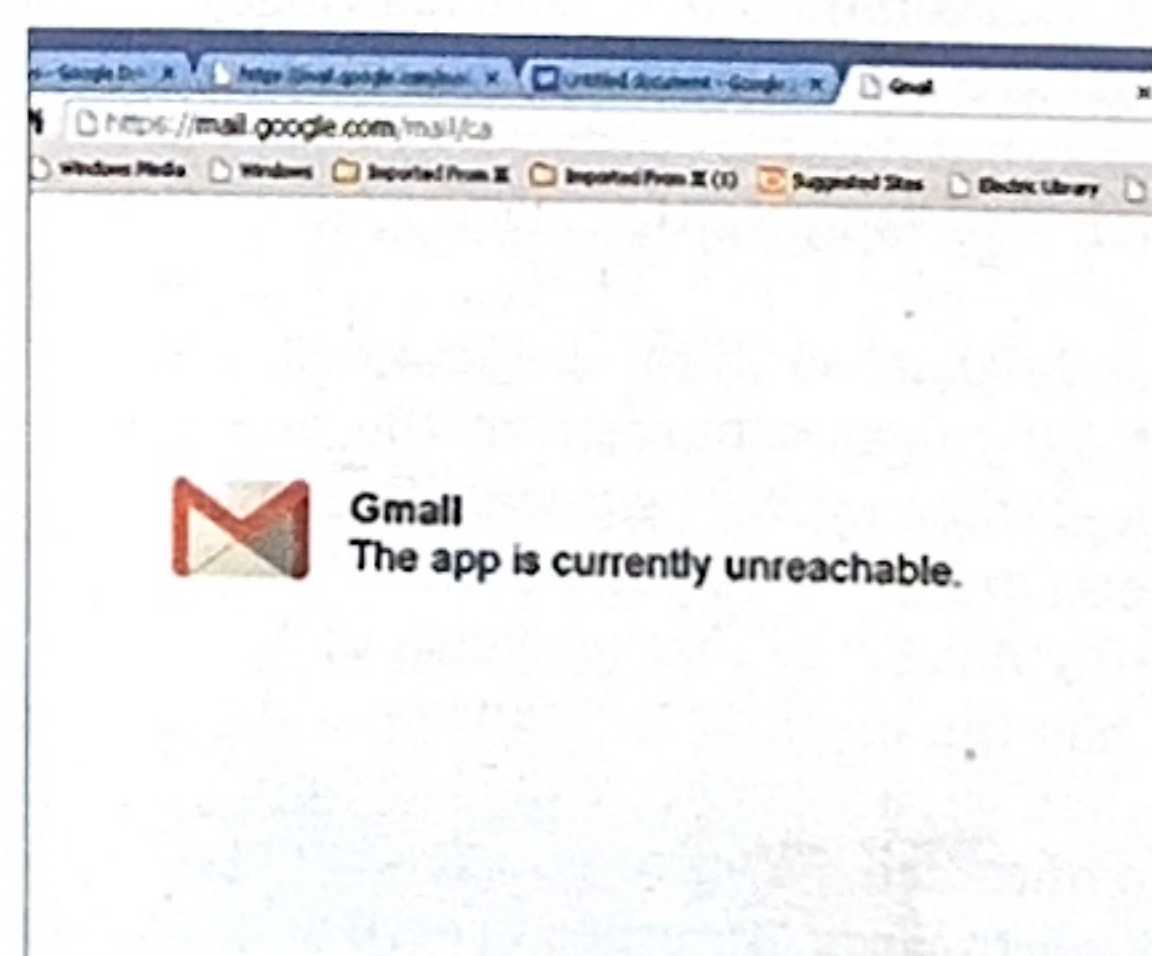
Rizzo is hopeful that he'll find a solution soon. "There's got to be a smoking gun somewhere that's causing this. Until we find it, I won't stop looking for it," he said. "I think there's something more immediate [than upgrading infrastructure]. That's just a gut feeling, not a guarantee."

## ERRORS ABOUND

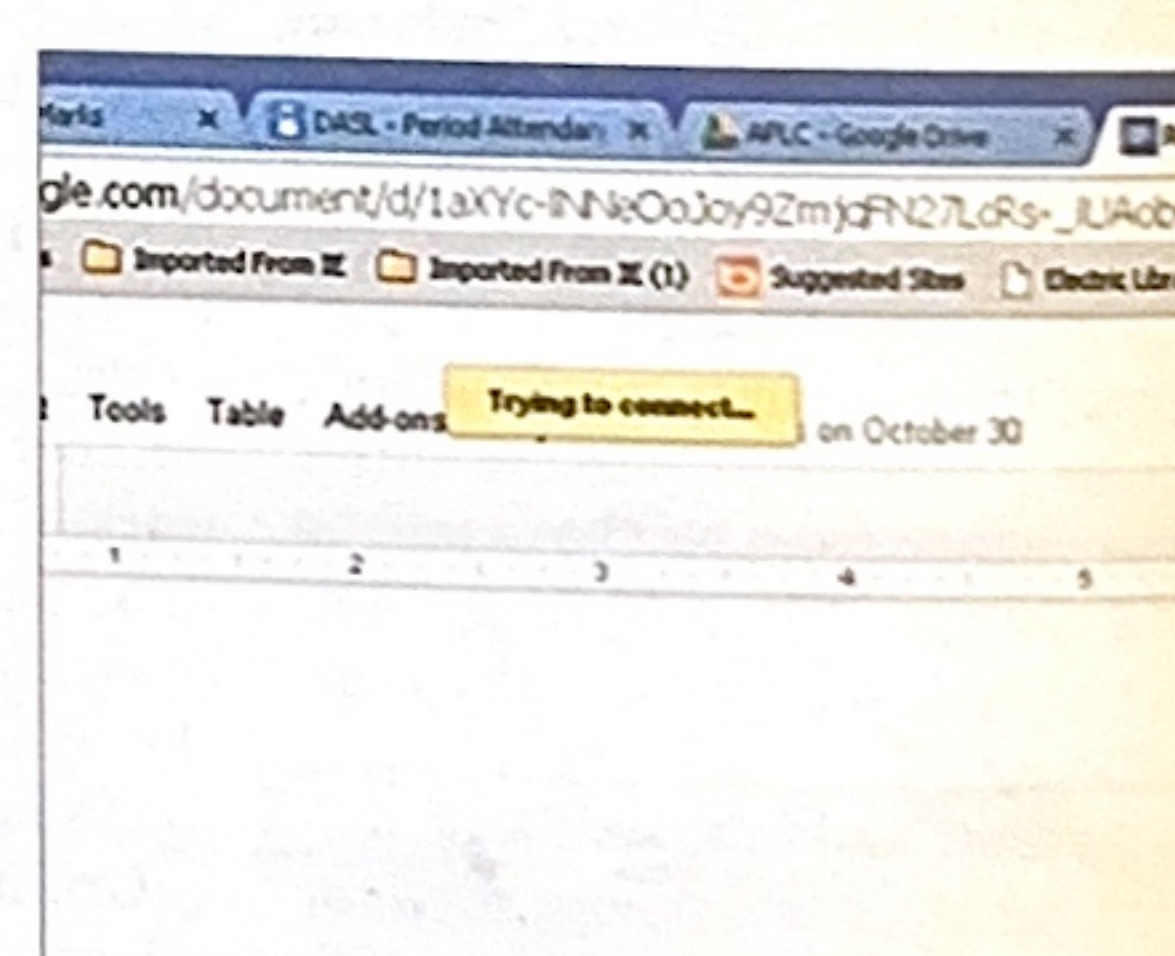
These error messages appeared on a high school computer Nov. 18. There was no outage this day; the errors were all caused by network slowness.



THE SHAKERITE



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THE SHAKERITE



# Cambodia

Service, more than sightseeing, takes students to Southeast Asia

ANABEL MCGUAN SPOTLIGHT EDITOR



AMANDA AHRENS

One of Cambodia's best-known and most distinctive landmarks, the Bayon is a famed Khmer temple in Angkor Thom, Cambodia. King Jayavarman ordered the construction of the Bayon, social studies teacher Amanda Ahrens' favorite place in Cambodia, in the late 12th or early 13th century. The Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient restored the structure in the 1900s, and it has remained a popular tourist destination.





AMANDA AHRENS



AMANDA AHRENS

**The ancient temple, Bayon, and exotic, local outdoor markets of Siem Reap, Cambodia contribute to the complex and ancient culture of the Southeast Asian country.**



ERIN SETSER/THE SHAKERITE

Shaker students have travelled to Canada, Germany and China through school. For the first time, Shaker is adding Cambodia to that list.

The trip will take 25 hours, but it was three years in the making. When social studies teacher Amanda Ahrens and students arrive in Cambodia March 27, they will begin a new chapter in Shaker's international travel history.

"I experienced travel through Shaker Heights my sophomore year with the band to Turkey. It was a phenomenal opportunity that I would love to make a reality again," said senior Ana Mitchell. "I figured that Cambodia is a place that I wouldn't be as likely to travel to if it wasn't for Ms. Ahrens setting up this program, so I decided to take the opportunity."

"A third to half of the trip is service-based," said Ahrens. "Our initial goal is service, but the trip has four goals: service, immersion, history of the genocide and ancient history."

"The service activities haven't been determined yet," said senior Lily Abrams. "We will provide whatever service is needed in the community."

Abrams became interested in the trip after hearing about it from her teacher. "I

**"It's a really exciting experience. I can't even imagine what it's going to be like. It's such a surreal thing to imagine."**

**HANNAH BARRETT**

was interested in immersing myself in a culture that I know little about. Also, I love to travel, and going to Southeast Asia is an amazing opportunity," she said. "I did some research and decided to sign up. I saw this trip as chance to step outside of my boundaries and expand my global horizon."

"It's a really exciting experience, said junior Hannah Barrett. "I can't even imagine what it's going to be like. It's such a surreal thing to imagine."

Unlike international trips by the band, choir or language programs, the Cambodia trip is available to any interested high school students.

"We wanted mostly juniors and seniors on the trip. I presented the trip to junior advisory and during class. I put up a few posters around the school, but it really spread by word of mouth," Ahrens said.

Mitchell was one of the people to find out about the trip that way. "At the end of my junior year my friend Lily, who is also on the trip, notified me about it after Ms. Ahrens told her. I immediately was interested and when school started in the fall I applied," she said.

Cambodia is particularly famed for its world renowned ancient temple city, Angkor, home to Angkor Wat, one famous Cam-

bodian temple.

"It's this temple that's supposedly one of the most beautiful sights in the world. There's actually a fungus destroying it, so it's on one of these must see lists of places to see," said Brian Berger, social studies teacher, who is working with Ms. Ahrens to plan the trip.



Amanda Ahrens

"One of the highlights will definitely be going to Angkor Wat," said Abrams. "We have the whole day to explore the ancient temple. We will also be attending a Cambodian circus, staying in a floating village, learning the basics of the Khmer language and visiting the killing fields."

"Obviously [they will learn about] Cambodian culture. They'll see what a developing nation is going through," Berger said.

The Communist Khmer Rouge regime incited the Cambodian genocide, which began in 1975 and lasted until 1979. The genocide occurred as the Khmer Rouge leader, Pol Pot, attempted to establish an agrarian society based on the principles of Stalinism and





Maoism. The regime killed 1.7 million people in pursuit of that goal.

The Khmer Rouge forced thousands to relocate, using torture and mass executions to incite fear. Twenty-five percent of the total population was killed before the genocide ended with the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

Cambodia currently has a population of about 10 million, 90-95 percent of whom are of Khmer ethnicity. The remaining population includes Chinese-Khmers, Khmer Islam (Chams), ethnic hill-tribe people (Khmer Loeu) and Vietnamese.

Despite a rocky past, tourism is a major part of Cambodia's economy today. According to the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism the number of international tourists in Cambodia increased from 2.88 million in 2011 to 3.58 million in 2012.

Mitchell, however, is looking forward to a less touristy opportunity. "The floating village sounds like it will be an experience like no other," she said. "We will be staying the night with a family on the boat-like houses and learning to cook meals and hopefully pick up some of the language."

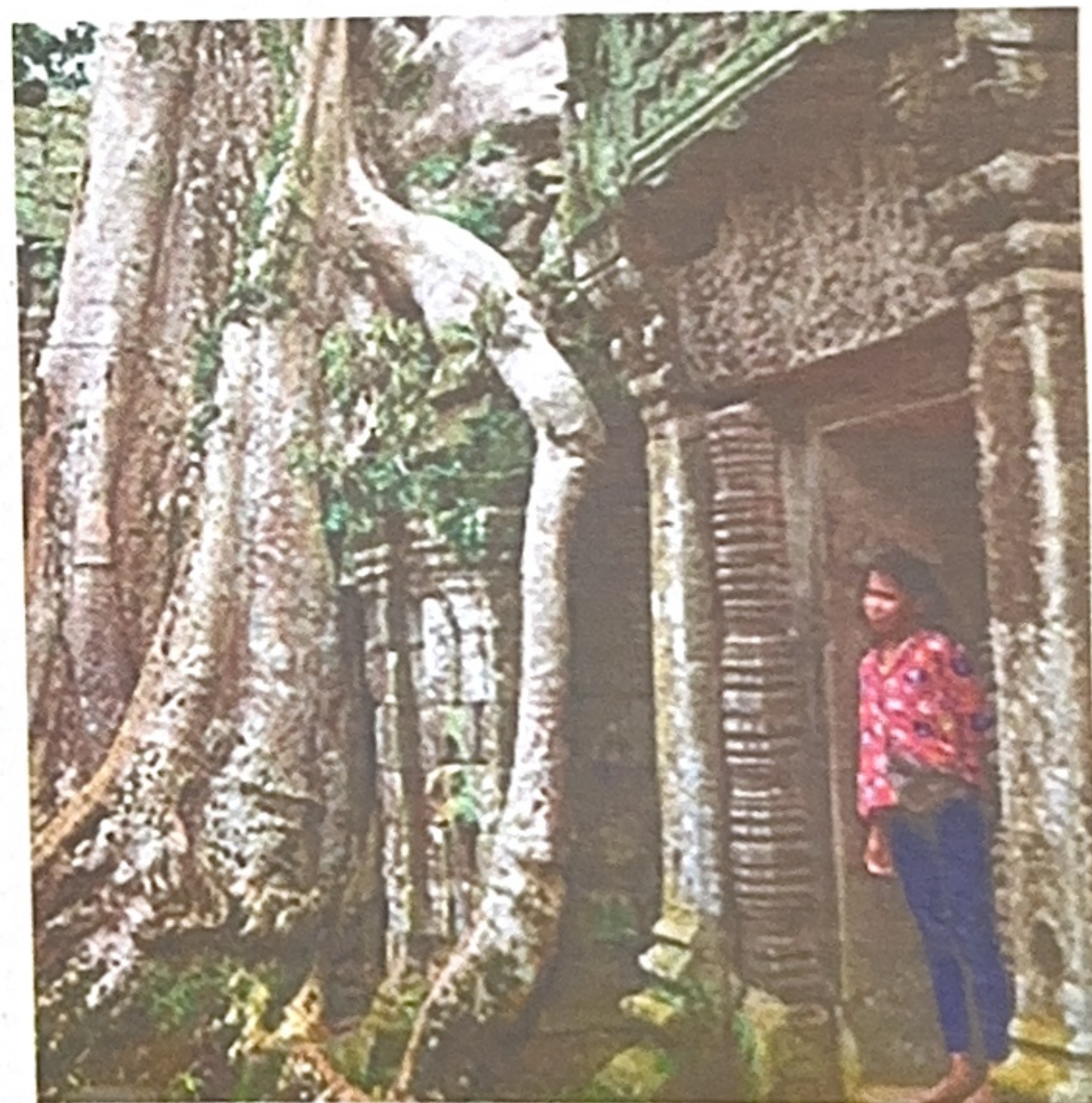
Abrams agreed. "I am excited about our

stay in the floating villages. We will be living with a family and living their daily life. Each day, a few of us will learn how to cook the traditional Khmer cuisine," said Abrams. "Staying in the floating villages is a completely different experience than traveling to the tourist attractions and the best way to learn about the culture."

"Ms. Ahrens has been working on this for several years, so it's been a work in progress and no one has had the work or insight to do a trip to Cambodia. It's been a lot of work for her, a lot of details. It's a big trip, so a lot goes into it," said Berger.

"Initially it was just me taking the kids, and there was some resistance," said Ahrens. The district was apprehensive about letting Ahrens take students to an unfamiliar foreign country alone. "We paired with Rustic Pathways, and now we have an in-country representative, two local guides, one non-local guide and chaperones. Safety is Rustic Pathways' number one game, so people felt better after we teamed up."

While the trip provides many extraordinary opportunities, Mitchell said she is simply "excited to see the country and get to know the girls that I will be traveling with."



A girl stands in Ta Prohm, an ancient temple, near the roots of a Banyan tree. The temple is located in the Angkor Complex in Siem Reap, Cambodia.



# Triumph Amid Tragedy

ABBY WHITE PRINT MANAGING EDITOR

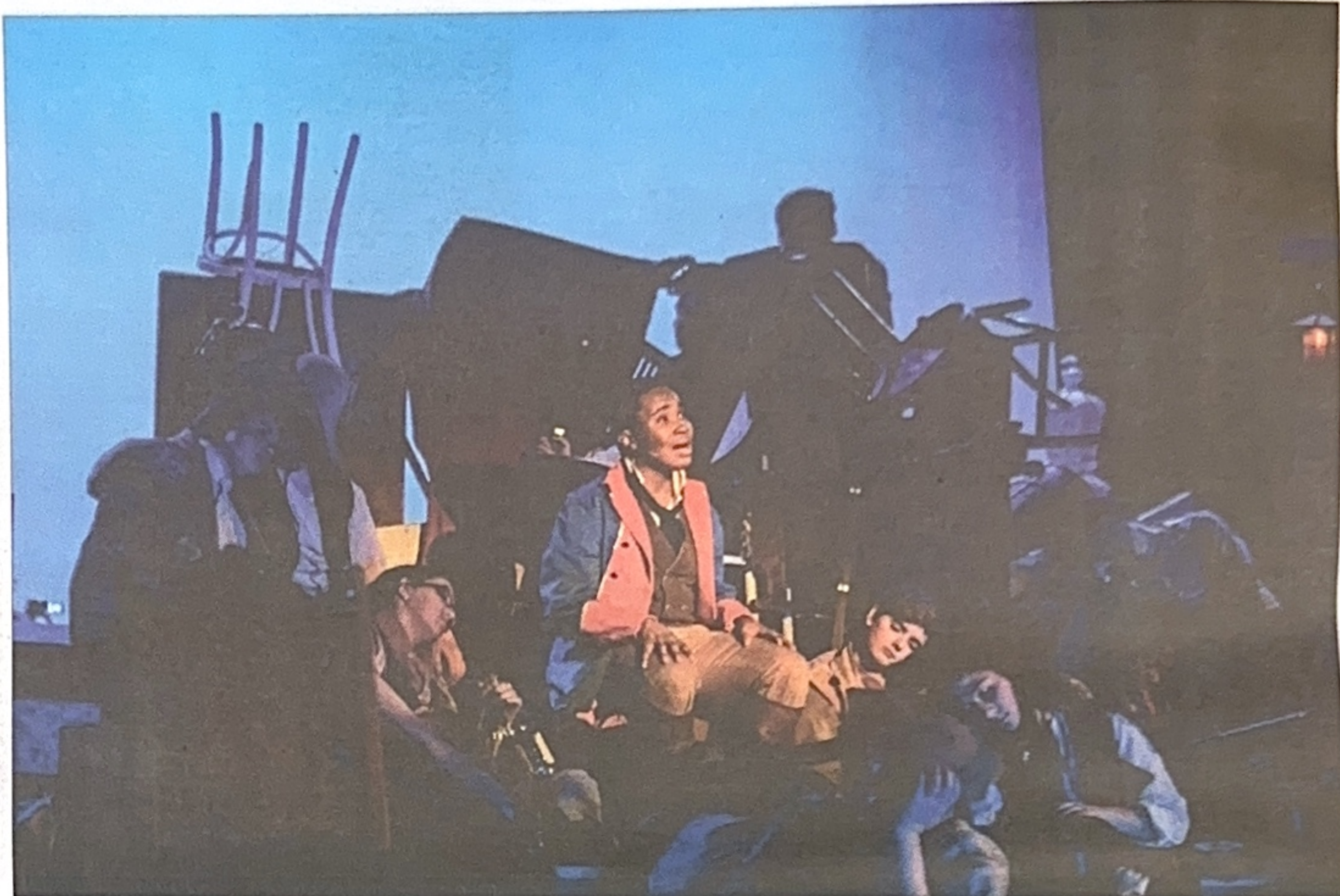
When I went to see the Theatre Department's production of "Les Misérables," which ran Nov. 20-22, friends and social media had told me it would be good. Yet I did not expect the level of excellence it would reach, which fully deserved the standing ovation it received.

The professional production of "Les Misérables" runs for two hours and 55 minutes — a long time even for professionals. As such, the Theatre Department performed the "Student Edition" of "Les Misérables," which ran 30 minutes less than the original. The production's company performed admirably despite that hurdle, and as the show progressed, the production shone.

Most of the lead actors have performed in such local theater companies as Heights Youth Theater and the professional Dobama Theater, and their experience showed. The cast tackled its obstacles with marvelous success, starting with junior Joshua Elmore's Jean Valjean. Elmore possessed an impressive vocal range as Valjean, and portrayed his character's moral qualms convincingly. Sophomore Gus Mahoney cast an appropriately dominating stage presence as the sneering, structured Inspector Javert.

In such a dank, unhappy setting, "Les Misérables" can only be a tragedy. Its first victim is Fantine, who undergoes a series of undeserved misfortunes that degrade her to nothingness. Junior Martha Jackson was heartbreaking in the role. As Jackson, who uses the pronouns "they/them," performed one of the musical's most famous songs, "I Dreamed a Dream," tears sparkled in their eyes. When Fantine died, Jackson imagined their young daughter Cosette there; they reached out and held their beloved daughter. Anyone who didn't tear up during that scene likely lacks tear ducts.

Monsieur and Madame Thénardier, Cosette's caretakers, feel very differently about Fantine's daughter. In her first scene, Madame Thénardier slaps and orders around young Cosette, who is played with endearing innocence by Jordyn Mitchum, a third grader at Mercer Elementary School. This was Mitchum's first show, and, I



Jean Valjean (Joshua Elmore) prays for a comrade's safety during the revolution portrayed in the Theatre Department's production of "Les Misérables."

hope, not her last, if her perfectly on-pitch "Castle on a Cloud" is anything to go by.

Junior Charles Miller and senior Klara Hricik were perfectly cast as the slimy Thénardiens. Out of all the cast members, they looked like they were having the most fun, playing their parts with hilarious physicality. They leapt across the stage and over people in their rousing joint number, "Master of the House," one of the best-choreographed, sung and acted pieces in the show.

The 15-year jump to Paris introduces a new set of characters. Cosette has grown up, and is now played by junior Lauryn Hobbs. She brought out the lightly-drawn character's heart, and her voice soared to the auditorium's ceiling. Cosette's love interest, Marius, was played and sung well by junior Lev Caruso, who handled the character's alternate elation, lovesickness, indecision and grief with skill.

Marius fights in the June Rebellion with his fellow student, Enjolras, and the 11-year-old Gavroche. Enjolras' love for the revolution matches Marius' feelings for Cosette, and junior Jack Bistriz played that conviction well. Sophomore Amelia Bayless-Marr was endearing as Gavroche. Eponine also participates in the rebellion for the short time she can. Senior Katie Wilkinson was excellent in the role, expressing many of her character's key emotions through mere looks and gestures.

However, the main cast's performances would mean little for the production without strong backing from the rest of the company. Out of the whole show, I was most impressed by the ensemble. They were consistently on key, together, under-

**"Les Miserables" conveys a tragedy, but the Theatre Department's show itself was a triumph.**

standable and strong.

The ensemble's triumph must be shared by the production's director, Scott Sumerak, and music director, Robert Schneider. Enunciation and pitch are difficult to accomplish en masse, especially when that mass has little previous training. Schneider, who also directed the excellent orchestra, deserves significant credit for teaching the cast so well, as does Sumerak, whose influence was evident in the ensemble's conviction. This ensemble understood what they were singing and appreciated the importance of it.

Behind-the-scenes wizard Chuck Tisdale was essential to the show's success as well. He led set design, sound and lighting. The set was of no small importance or difficulty in a musical that traverses three cities and more than 15 years. Tisdale designed set pieces that served their scenes well and were easily movable, causing little interruption to the plot. The sound had some rough spots — some un-miced ensemble members' solos may have been difficult to hear in the back of the auditorium, and the orchestra overshadowed the performers in a few numbers. However, the sound was altogether sufficient, and the lighting was good as well.

At its base, though, the show's excellence stemmed from the students. Students performed it; students — in the stage crew, as ushers, from the Theatre Department's classes, and in innumerable other roles — cobbled and kept it together. They produced a show that fared much better than the revolution it portrayed. "Les Misérables" conveys a tragedy, but the Theatre Department's show itself was triumph.



# I'll Have a Whole-Wheat Waffle, a Glass of Orange Juice and a Side of Time

With increasingly busy schedules, breakfasts become second thoughts as students disregard morning meals, let alone healthy ones

ZACHARY NOSANCHUK STAFF REPORTER

Breakfast poses a problem to teenagers who want to both eat the meal and want to get to school on time. It is the first meal of the day to break the fast you had while you slept.

With increasingly busy schedules, however, high school students often skip the meal.

"I'm usually too tired to eat breakfast," said senior Ethan Shafron. "I could eat breakfast, or I could be on time."

Shafron is not alone. In a survey conducted of 50 Shaker Heights High School students, 35, or 70 percent, said they ate breakfast each day, but 15, or 30 percent, said they do not.

Dr. Nicole Lidyard, a dietitian at University Hospitals, cautioned against skipping breakfast.

"Breakfast is certainly the most important meal of the day," said Lidyard. "It helps jump-start your metabolism." Lidyard explained that breakfast improves students' overall concentration throughout the entire day.

However, eating breakfast has not always been a normal practice. The Romans viewed the morning meals as gluttony, and in the Middle Ages no one ate before the daily morning mass.

Only during the Industrial Revolution did eating breakfast become popular, as workers and their bosses needed an early



Nicole Lidyard

**"There's lots of research that shows our brain needs food in the morning to be more focused."**



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

A student eats a Pop-Tart, a popular on-the-go breakfast item and a favorite in high school vending machines. However, with 15 grams of sugar apiece, Pop-Tarts are not advisable for a healthy breakfast.

meal to sustain themselves for a day of factory labor, according to BBC News Magazine.

A survey respondent who said he did not eat breakfast, freshman Henry Murray, said time constraints prevent him from eating breakfast before school everyday. "I think it is important," Murray said, "but it is about if you have time to eat breakfast in the morning."

Freshman Cory Henderson, another survey respondent, faced the same predicament. "I wish I could eat breakfast, but I stay up decently late and don't have time," Henderson said.

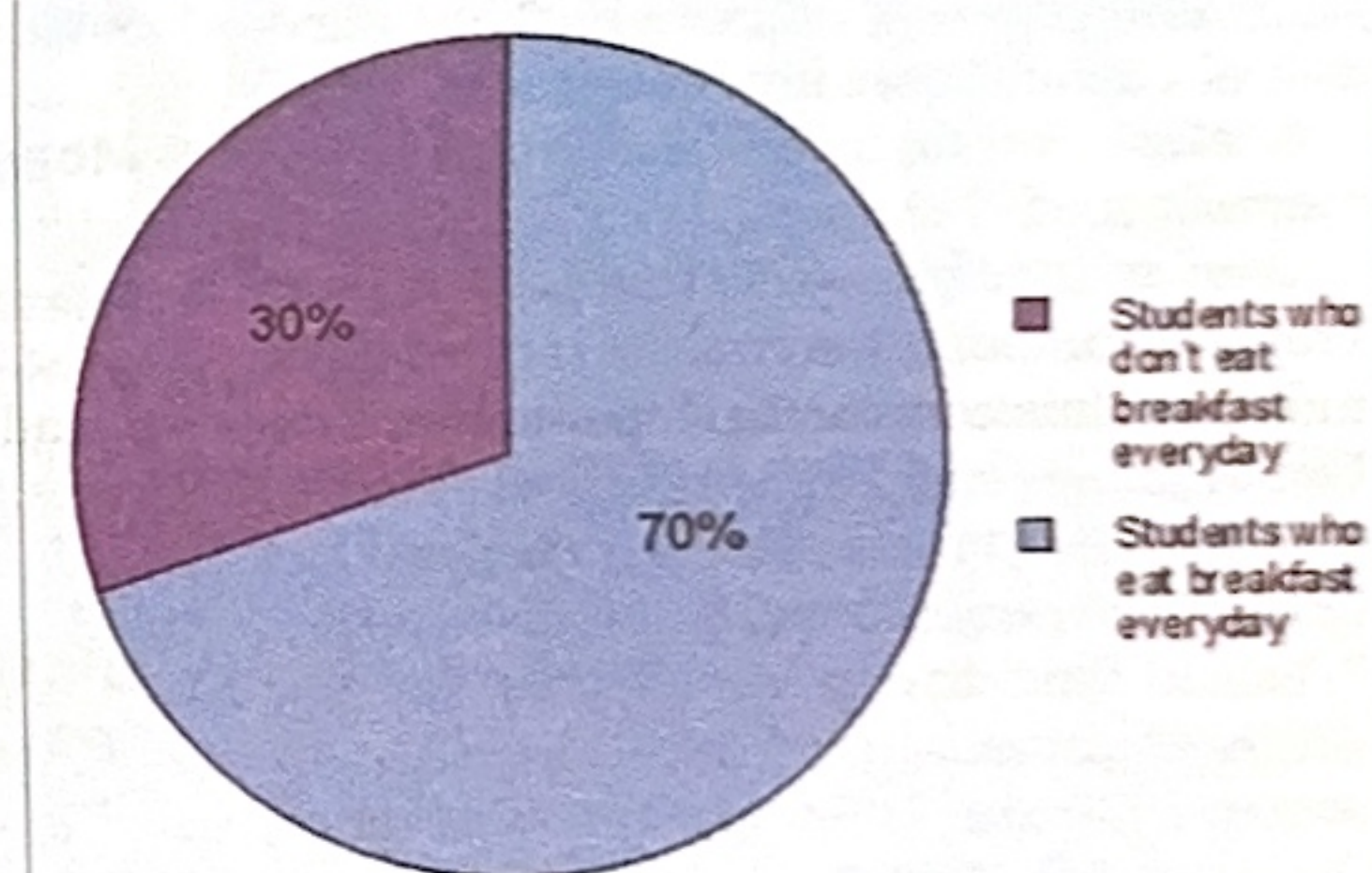
"I wake up late, around 7:15, and go to sleep around 10," he said.

Students and teachers who eat breakfast have assorted reasons for doing so. "It keeps you energized throughout the day," freshman Essence Redick said.

Sophomore Louis Schwartz is a breakfast believer as well. "I'm kind of rushed to eat, but I never forget," he said. "And if I do forget, I always keep a granola bar in my backpack."

Science teacher William Scanlon agreed, calling breakfast "essential." Scanlon said he needs breakfast to keep up his own energy throughout the day.

## Shaker Students Who Eat Breakfast



Survey sample of 50 students interviewed in person.

ABBY WHITE//THE SHAKERITE

History teacher Paul Kelly analyzed the subject metaphorically. "I think that your body is like your car," he said. "If you don't put both enough and quality gas in your car, you stall out."

Shaker students' breakfast problems go beyond whether they eat the meal. Another issue is whether students eat nutritious breakfast foods that sustain them throughout the day. Students in a first period, 10th grade health class recorded their breakfasts for one week.

Answers were varied. Altogether, the breakfast log found a scarcity of healthy breakfasts. In the health class, 12 students



# What Should We Eat in The Morning?

Dr. Nicole Lidyard recommends eating five grams of protein and five grams of fiber for breakfast -- her Five and Five Rule. Here are some ways to transform your meals into healthier ones.

EGGO WAFFLE



95  
Calories

COLD CEREAL



210  
Calories

PLAIN BAGEL



270  
Calories

BORING TOAST



80  
Calories

HEALTHY WAFFLE



368  
Calories

HEALTHY CEREAL



305  
Calories

HEALTHY BAGEL



241  
Calories

HEALTHY TOAST



265  
Calories

Many meals that fit Lidyard's Five and Five Rule have more calories than their less healthy counterparts. However, not all calories are harmful: in this case, they account for nutrients, such as peanut butter's healthy fats. Additionally, meals with more fiber may contain more calories, but fiber keeps people fuller for longer. As such, although the meal seems less healthy, people will eat less during the day. The numbers balance out.

filled out the log, and from Dec. 1-5, students ate 21 bowls of cereal and 11 servings of bacon. Some students wrote "gum" and "chips" on their breakfast logs as their morning meal.

Nine individuals wrote that they skipped breakfast certain days, and ate it other days. The most common day to skip breakfast was Monday.

Lidyard said these are not ideal breakfast foods. "The perfect breakfast follows a rule. It has to have five grams of fiber and five grams of protein," she said. She used the five and five rule to create her most nutritional breakfast ideas.

Natalie Martin, a senior, eats a breakfast that happens to follow the five and five rule. Martin said, "I normally have to have two breakfasts." First, she has two bananas and chai tea at home. Then, "when I walk to school, I have two pieces of toast with strawberry jelly on them." Martin walks to school daily.

Grabbing a piece of buttered toast or a Pop Tart may seem easier to busy students who must finish last-minute homework, brush their teeth like the Flash and run to school in the morning. However, eating a healthy breakfast could do more than energize you: it could help you perform better at school.

"Students who eat a low-glycemic, balanced breakfast may have better concentra-

## A Week at a Student's Breakfast Table

**Monday** -- a cinnamon roll and apple juice

**Tuesday** -- Cocoa Puffs cereal with milk

**Wednesday** -- pancakes, bacon and apple juice

**Thursday** -- Cocoa Puffs cereal with milk

**Friday** -- cheesy potatoes and strawberry water

ABBY WHITE//THE SHAKERITE

tion and more positive reactions to difficult tasks than students who eat a carbohydrate-laden breakfast," according to Eating Healthy.com.

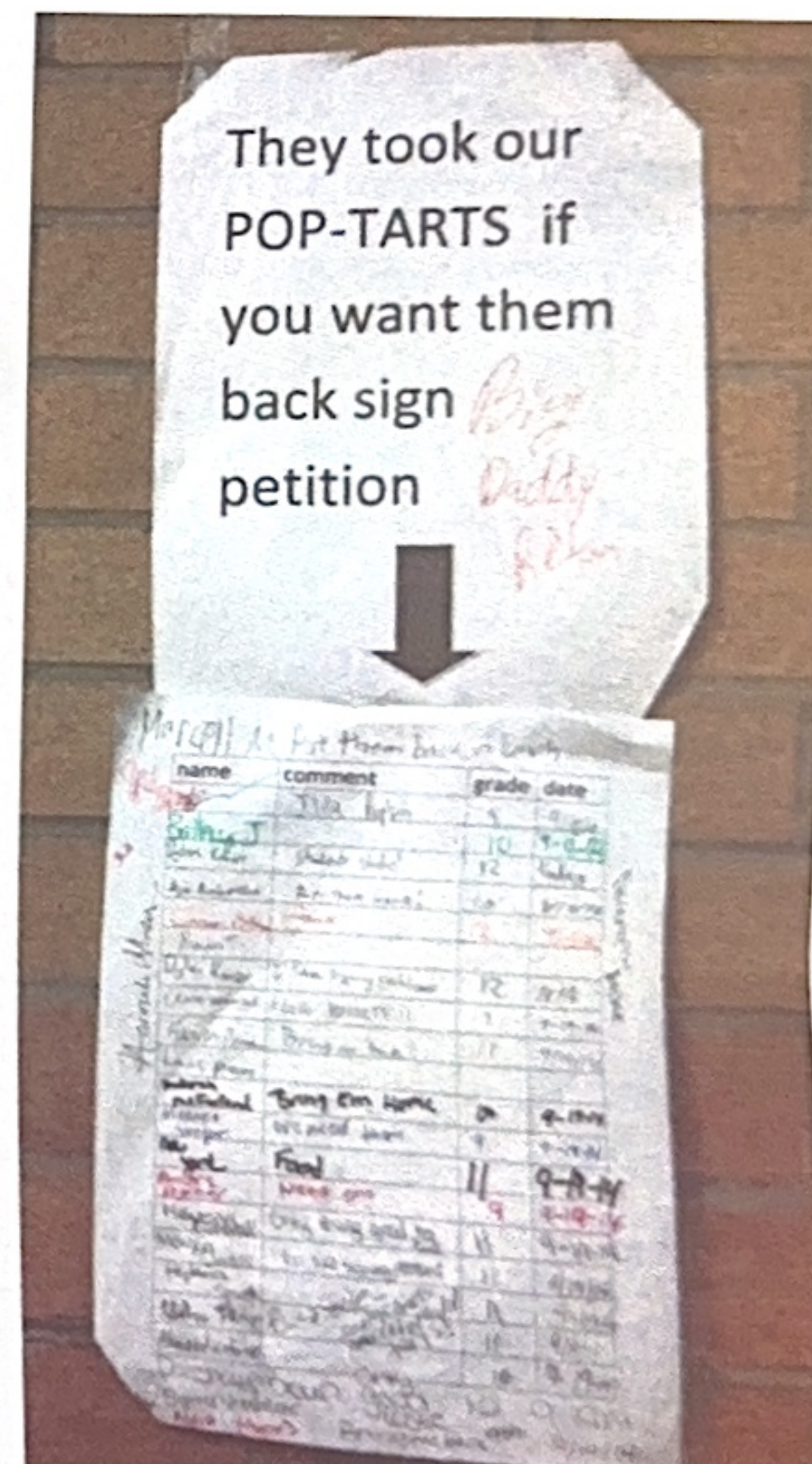
Henderson agreed. "When I eat [breakfast], I am more focused at school," Henderson said.

"There's lots of research that shows our brain needs food in the morning to be more focused," Lidyard said.

Kendra Agee-Barney, the 10th grade health teacher whose class took the breakfast survey, emphasized breakfast's importance for students' health as well. "I think that your body will tell you how much it needed breakfast once you eat it," Agee-Barney said. "You'll feel better after you eat it."

**"I think that your body is like your car. If you don't put both enough and quality gas in your car, you stall out."**

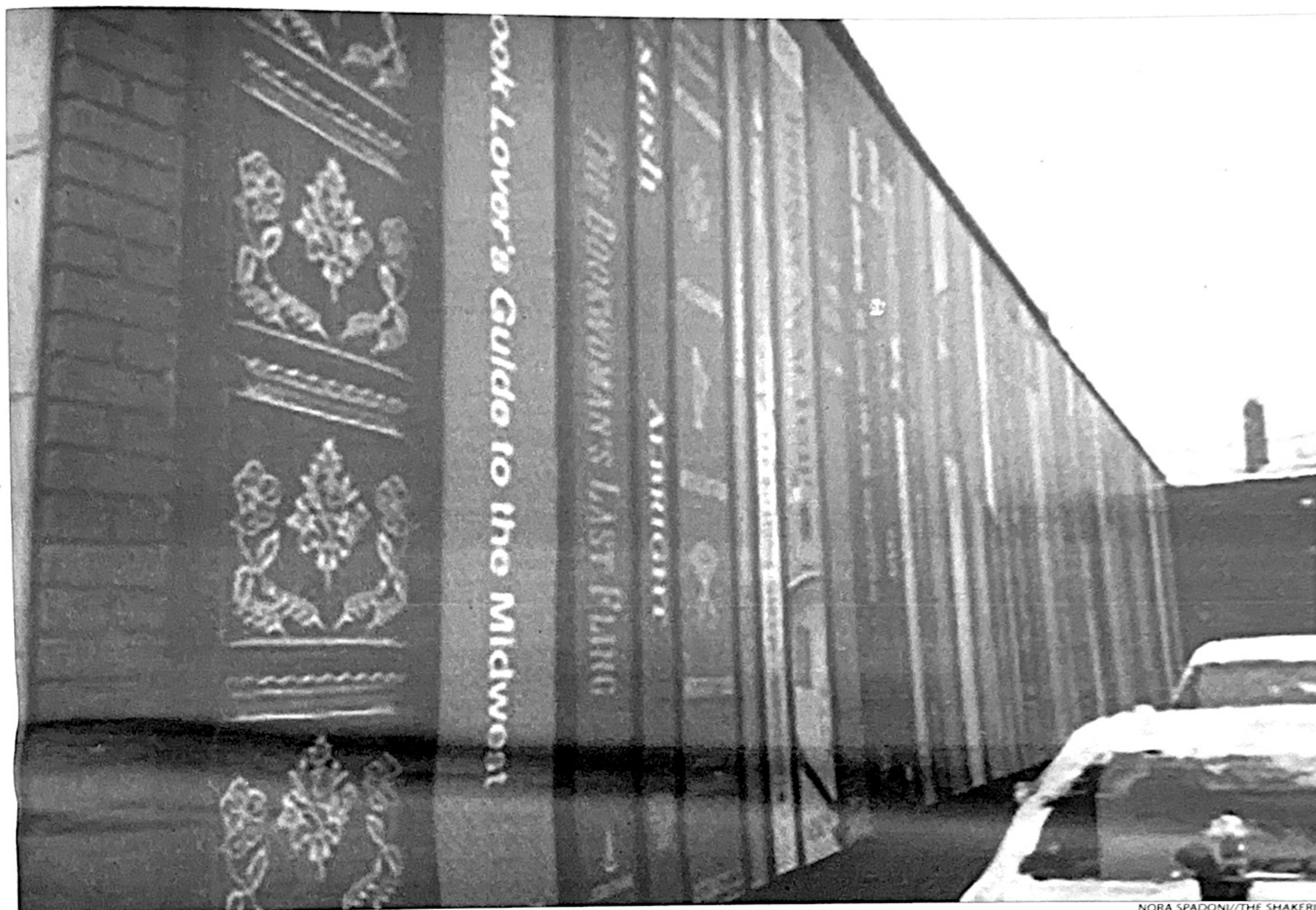
PAUL KELLY



ELENA WEINGART//THE SHAKERITE

A petition protests the absence of Pop-Tarts in the school cafeteria vending machines at the beginning of the year.





A colorful mural depicting a stack of books lines the side of Loganberry Books. The bookstore is independently owned and operated by Harriet Logan in the Larchmere area of Shaker.

NORA SPADONI/THE SHAKERITE

# Home for the Holidays?

## Make the most of your Shaker staycation with this guide

NORA SPADONI SPOTLIGHT EDITOR

**F**orget an exotic vacation to ancient Peruvian ruins, spending the holidays in Cleveland is something to brag about. While this prospect could seem dreary, Shaker Heights offers plenty of venues for festive food, fun and family. Residents often overlook Shaker's array of small shops and restaurants. This comprehensive staycation guide will help Shaker residents rediscover their city.

### Shopping

Instead of hitting the big chain stores, students should consider locally-owned shops for their holiday needs. Besides helping to support Shaker, local stores may offer unique gifts that are not mass-produced.

The Larchmere district is one such local shopping hot spot. It hosts locally-owned

businesses ready for holiday shoppers.

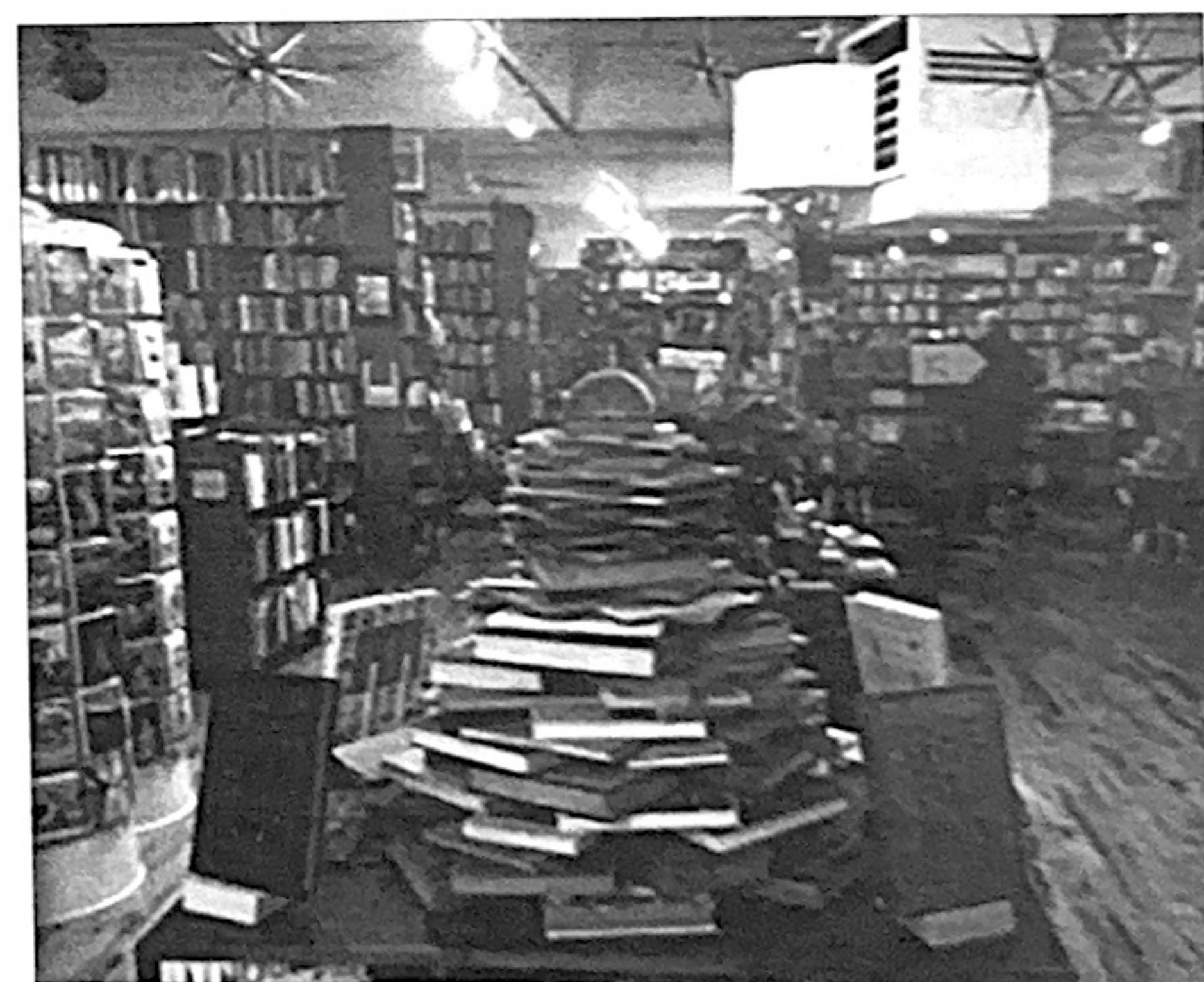
Loganberry Books, independently owned and operated by Harriet Logan, features an inventory of more than 100,000 new, used and rare books.

"Nothing beats a book," said Logan. "Browsing a bookstore is unlike browsing online."

On entering Loganberry, shoppers are welcomed by the snug atmosphere and towering bookshelves. Loganberry sells books on any subject -- from architecture to fashion to fiction -- include vintage volumes.

At Loganberry, "you can meet books and find new perspectives you might not have been introduced to otherwise," said Logan. "We sell newbies and antiquarian books here, so you will be sure to meet some old friends and things you have never heard of."

Wedged in the back of the bookstore is a curiosity shop that offers stocking stuffers. From hand-crafted jewelry to captivating kids' games, the shop holds interesting gifts for any age.



NORA SPADONI/THE SHAKERITE

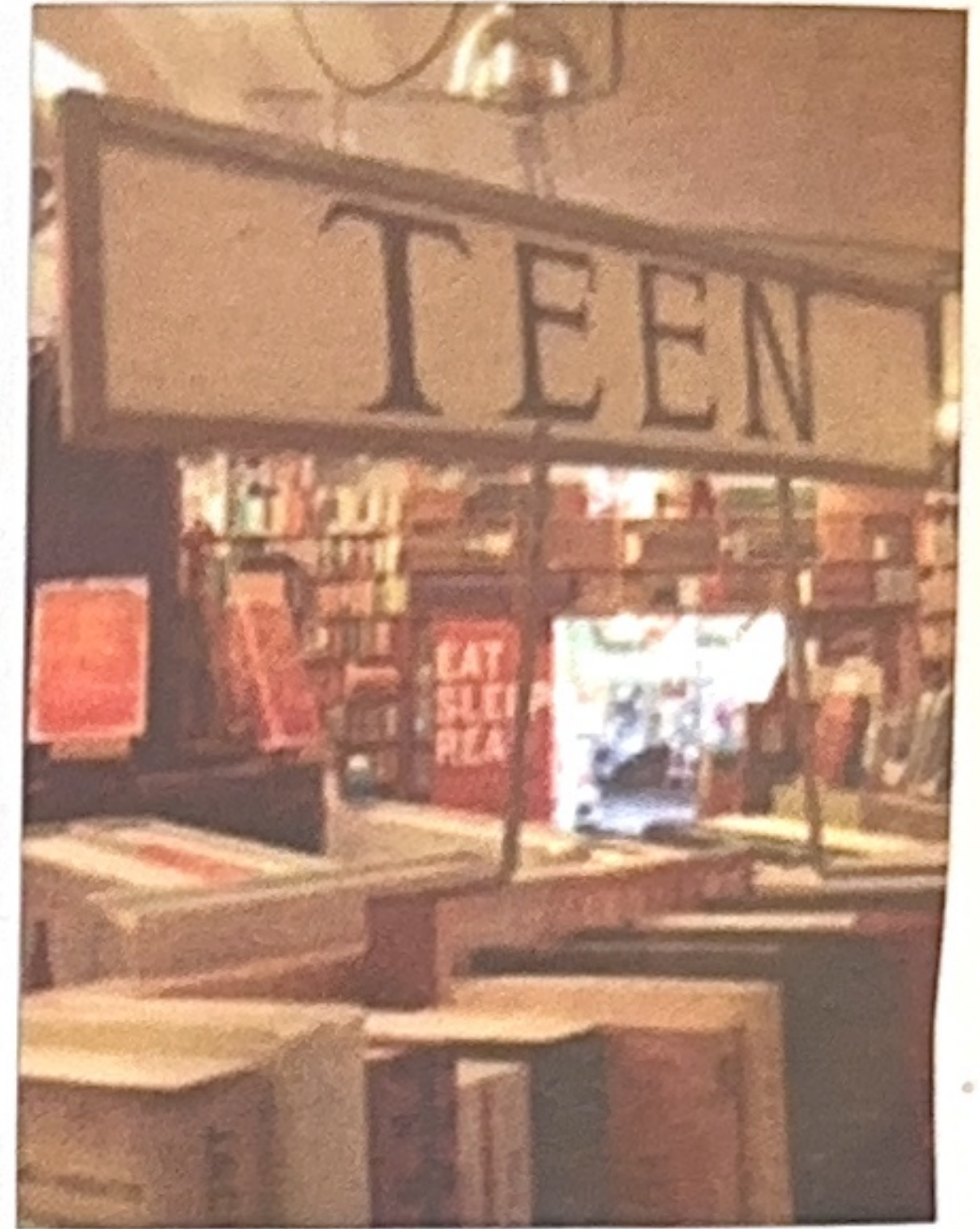
The interior of Loganberry Books, in the Larchmere area, evokes a comfortable, cozy atmosphere in which shoppers mingle and browse.





NORA SPADONI/THE SHAKERITE

Eclectic Eccentric, a vintage clothing store located in the Larchmere district, offers one-of-a-kind outfits from almost every decade of the past century. Its neighbor, Loganberry Books, has equally as many options, including a large teen section. The bookstore offers books of all genres, from mystery to romance.



NORA SPADONI/THE SHAKERITE

"We have a dozen artists and some fair trade crafts," Logan said.

Sophomore Amelia Gingras is a Loganberry shopper. "It's really cool," she said. "It's just an awesome place. They have really cool books, not just stupid teen books."

Strong Bindery, a book-binding service, shares space with Loganberry, so visitors can watch books being repaired while they shop.

Additionally, with every purchase, Loganberry gives customers a free book from any genre, including children's, middle grade, teen, mystery, romance and fiction.

"We have toys, tchotchkes, games and, I dare say," said Logan, "some books."

Next door to Loganberry is the vintage clothing store Eclectic Eccentric. Owner Tracy Hilbert displays a wide variety of clothing from nearly every decade of the past century. The charming, cluttered shop bursts with character and provides a superb opportunity to shop for bargain clothes. On entering, visitors are overwhelmed by a fusillade of funky jewelry, clothing and accessories. The store also carries modern lines of children's clothes, Two Crows for Joy and Adooka Organics.

Hilbert said that she has "a lot of items that are affordable to students."

"I try to [be] accessible to all types of demographic," she said. "There are things in here that people can buy that are less expensive, and then there are things that are obviously more expensive."

Hilbert added that "it's always good to support a small business. There are fun and functional objects here that you can find. I brought a lot of new gift items that I think are appealing to young people."

"I just think," she said, "if you want something unique to wear, then you can shop here instead of your chain stores. The chances are slim to none that somebody will have the same outfit as you."

The Larchmere website sums up the allure of the area. "The moms-and-pops here take great pride in the new and vintage



NORA SPADONI/THE SHAKERITE

Loganberry Books entices shoppers to pull up a chair and indulge in a good read. The bookstore has both old volumes, including some that are very rare, and newer ones. It also features Strong Bindery, a book-binding service that customers can watch while shopping.

goods and services they offer," it states.

#### Food

Looking to sample some of Shaker's delicacies during the winter months? Larchmere offers a batch of restaurants and cafes for frigid December afternoons.

In addition to the Larchmere Tavern, Larchmere holds Felice Urban Cafe, which offers choices from burgers to bouillabaisse. Jezebel's Bayou is another option for anyone interested New Orleans fine dining.

Felice Operations Manager Melissa Cory said Felice "is kind of a funky space. We are in an old house, a turn-of-the-century home."

She added that the restaurant has "a cozy atmosphere" and that "some of the things on the menu are pretty reasonably priced."

For this reason, high school students might stop at Felice this holiday season for a bite of some of their locally-sourced, fresh-made menu options.

"The food is really great. It's made fresh in house," said Cory. "Everything is made cooked to order, and we do local sourcing for food... we use local bakeries, local meat

**"We have toys,  
tchotchkes,  
games and, I  
dare say, some  
books."**

**HARRIET LOGAN**

shops, local vegetable growers."

"We've got the sustainability aspect going," she said. "We don't even have a microwave!"

For the holidays, Felice does change its menu seasonally. Additionally, they have specials every day.

"Our age range is really diverse and our customer base is really diverse," Cory said.

Outside of Larchmere, Shaker offers plenty other locales for nibbling and noshing. Lucy's Sweet Surrender is a bakery on Chagrin Boulevard. Touted by [lucyssweetsurrender.com](http://lucyssweetsurrender.com) as the best Old World Bakery in Cleveland, they offer a variety of services, whether you're interested in a special catering order or individual pastries. Specifically, Lucy's is a Hungarian bakery and bakes ethnic food from scratch. They strive to provide quality pastries at affordable prices. Some favorites include their donuts, croissants and strudel.

Lucy's Sweet Surrender is owned by Michael Feigenbaum, '72 graduate of SHHS.

"Basically, bakeries are dead," he said. "That's a pretty rare thing to have in a town."

Lucy's strives to increase its appeal in





NORA SPADONI/THE SHAKERITE

Shaker's Larchmere area offers locally-owned shops and restaurants for all tastes. Decked in a fresh coat of snow, the district's main street looked appropriately seasonal Nov. 28 during a holiday stroll.

Shaker and raise the town's opinion of local bakeries. "We are really hoping to attract people from right around here," said Feigenbaum. "We don't want people to go to Giant Eagle and buy Ho Hos and Ding Dongs and all that stuff."

"Young people are more interested in high quality products," said Feigenbaum. "People like to buy our quality pies."

Lucy's makes their holiday cookies "from scratch. We make many other products for Christmas like yule logs, cakes, torts," said Feigenbaum. "We don't make phony holiday stuff just for the holidays."

"Anyone interested in ethnic food or foods from scratch would be interested," said Feigenbaum. "There are very few places that actually mix their own cookies."

"We make everything from scratch so they're high quality products," said Feigenbaum. "There are no places like this in the whole city of Shaker Heights."

Dewey's Coffee Cafe offers locally-roasted, fair trade coffees and specialty drinks as well as fresh soups, salads, sandwiches and pastries. An inviting fireplace, comfortable seating, pleasant colors, music and artwork create a comfortable atmosphere. Voted Cleveland's best coffee house by Cleveland Magazine, Dewey's lives up to its slogan as Shaker Square's gathering house.

Kevin Hoffman, Dewey's general manager, said the cafe is ideal for high schoolers.

"We're kind of for everyone," he said. "I would totally encourage Shaker kids to come here. The atmosphere is welcoming."

The cafe also hosts live music on Friday and Saturday nights. About 25 percent of the musical groups are from Shaker.

"For the holidays, we have kind of obvious things like eggnog and eggnog latte, peppermint syrup," said Hoffman. "We have deals on our popcorn tins, and there is 15 percent off on Mondays -- it encourages people to come in and get some of that

stuff."

Hoffman said, "I think there are already several young people that hang out here, so they might run into someone they already know... there's a sense of community. The artsy types hang out here."

Dewey's, Hoffman said, is "a good place to come meet variety of people and get culture."

Dewey's Coffee also lies conveniently across the street from Shaker Square Cinemas. This seals the deal for Gingras, who said she likes "to go to a movie at Shaker Cinemas because it's near Dewey's Coffee."

#### Recreation

Although Shaker may not be near any mountain ranges, residents who are willing can make the trek to nearby Brandywine or Boston Mills for skiing opportunities.

Brandywine is located in Sagamore Hills while Boston Mills is slightly closer in Peninsula. An adult all-day pass at Brandywine or Boston Mills costs \$43, and ski rental costs an additional \$30.

Located in Ellicottville, New York, ski resort Holiday Valley makes a great day trip for staycationers looking to get out of the house. The drive to Holiday Valley is about a three hours via I-90 E and I-86 E. An adult 8-hour pass for the weekend costs \$68. However, prices are cheaper for the same pass on a weekday -- only \$56. Don't forget to add the \$29 ski rental or \$31 snowboard rental costs to your pass.

More convenient for many Shaker residents are the array of sledding hills the town has to offer. Sophomore Robbie Hart prefers the hill at Thornton Park. "It's the largest hill, probably, in Shaker," he said.

Gingras said that while the hills at Beachwood Park are "not as long as Thornton," they are "still pretty good." Additionally, Beachwood Park may not be as crowded as Thornton, Gingras said.

**"We are really hoping to attract people from right around here. We don't want people to go to Giant Eagle and buy Ho Hos and Ding Dongs and all that stuff."**

**MICHAEL  
FEIGENBAUM**

Thornton Park also offers ice skating, which Shaker residents can enjoy for \$3.

#### Fun

Sometimes, instead of hitting ski slopes or sledding hills, it's better to stay inside on a cold day. The holidays are a prime time to see big-budget movies that will interest audiences of all shapes and sizes.

"Into the Woods," starring Anna Kendrick, Emily Blunt, Meryl Streep and Johnny Depp, among others, intertwines classic Grimm's fairy tales such as Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk and Rapunzel in a world appropriately grim. It hits theaters Dec. 24.

"The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies," features Martin Freeman and Ian McKellen in the epic finale to the movie trilogy -- itself a late prequel to the Academy Award-winning "Lord of the Rings" trilogy -- that will play starting Dec. 16.

Downtown Cleveland, a short train ride away, also offers inexpensive concerts. For only \$16.50, Shaker students can attend "Wish You Were Here," a Pink Floyd Tribute concert at the House of Blues. The House of Blues offers other inexpensive, even free concerts as well.

#### Your Staycay Starts Here

Overall, Shaker offers plenty of opportunities for residents of all ages who hope to make the most of their staycation.

If the holidays bring you company, the Larchmere website suggests you "bring your out-of-town guests for a real slice of homegrown Cleveland."

Harriet Logan, owner of Loganberry Books in the Larchmere area, said, "I recommend high school students to keep an open mind."

Spotlight Editor Anabel McGuan contributed reporting.



# For Shaker, Ahmad, Parting Will Be Such Sweet Sorrow

West Virginia recruit's talent, leadership leave lasting impression

SAM DANFORD STAFF REPORTER

The season has not yet begun, but it's hard not to think about the end.

This year will close the Esa Ahmad era at Shaker, and the senior standout, his teammates and coaches are reflecting on that reality already.

"It has been an honor to watch him and also play alongside with him," said senior Courtney Mays.

In 54 games over the past two seasons, Ahmad averaged 22 points, 10.2 rebounds and 2.6 assists. He has shot 56.1 percent from the field and 42.3 percent from three-point land. From the line, he has hit 69.2 percent of free throws.

Ahmad has played power forward throughout his Shaker career. Before his junior season, he earned 21 offers from Division I universities, including West Virginia, Ohio State, Maryland, Cleveland State and Wisconsin. Ahmad ultimately chose WVU and signed a letter of intent Nov. 10, 2013.

The players are "humbled," in junior guard Matt Mahoney's words, to have such a talented player on their team. Ahmad's skill contributes to wins, but so do his efforts to help his teammates improve and succeed.

"Esa plays a big role in leadership, not just vocally but also by example as well, which is very beneficial to the team," junior forward Cameron Hawkins agreed.

"Esa is what keeps this team together as a whole," said Mahoney. "If he goes down with an injury or is not even part of the team, then the team would have a hard time winning ballgames."

Head Coach Danny Young agreed.

"He is so unselfish and makes other players around him so much better," said Young. "He's a great kid with a positive attitude. He really cares for his teammates and coaches."

"My biggest struggle of my Shaker career has been trying to balance my sports and school work," said Ahmad. "But it has been coming along a lot better than the previous years." As Ahmad has matured as a player,

**"If he goes down with an injury or is not even part of the team, then the team would have a hard time winning ballgames."**

MATT MAHONEY



Senior Esa Ahmad shoots a free throw during a home game against Mentor in 2014. Ahmad committed to play at Division I West Virginia University last November. He received 21 offers from Division I schools.

the coaching staff has encouraged him to improve his skills and take on a leadership role in the team. "The coaching staff and I are preaching to Ahmad to be more of a vocal leader," said assistant coach Adrian Lewis. "Whether it is in practice, the weight room or in games, he has done a great job in fulfilling his role."

Ahmad's talent and effort has propelled him to the No. 41 spot among high school basketball players nationwide in ESPN's Top 100 chart.

"Ahmad is a highly versatile and multi-dimensional forward who's capable of initiating offense," Adam Finkelstein wrote for ESPN Insider.

"He rebounds it well, has the potential to play multiple positions and is a mismatch problem when looking for his own offense thanks to his ability to go off the dribble or play with his back to the basket," wrote Finkelstein. "He's also not shy from behind the 3-point line."

Coaches have helped Ahmad develop layers as an athlete, especially defensively. "The coaching staff has done a great job in focusing on preparing the team along with teaching Ahmad the tools he needs to succeed at the next level," said Lewis.

"The one skill that I am going to have to work on when I play at West Virginia is being able to defend at a high level," said Ahmad. "Also to keep my body in shape so I can compete with the rest of the players."

Shooting efficiency will also serve Ahmad well at WVU. Rare among high scorers, Ahmad averages more than 25 points a game,

but only takes around 15 shots per game.

In Ahmad's senior season, the Raiders will likely contend once again for the state title. Last year, Shaker lost in the regional semifinals to East Tech High School 70-54 at the Wolstein Center at Cleveland State University.

With or without a state championship, however, the Raiders will miss Ahmad when the season ends.

"The one thing I am going to miss most about playing alongside Esa is his unselfishness," said Mays. "The way he makes plays at the right time and is never afraid to pass the ball if there is a better shot."

"I will miss Esa's versatility, which impacts the overall game drastically," said Young. "There are coaches in the Greater Cleveland area that never get a chance to coach a player like Esa. In my young career as the head coach, I have had players like Terry Rozier and Esa Ahmad..."

"I would say, 'I'm blessed!'"

Ahmad feels equally lucky to have worked with Young. "I think the thing I am going to miss most of all is not going to be able to be coached by Coach Young anymore, who has helped guide me the most in preparing to play at West Virginia," said Ahmad.

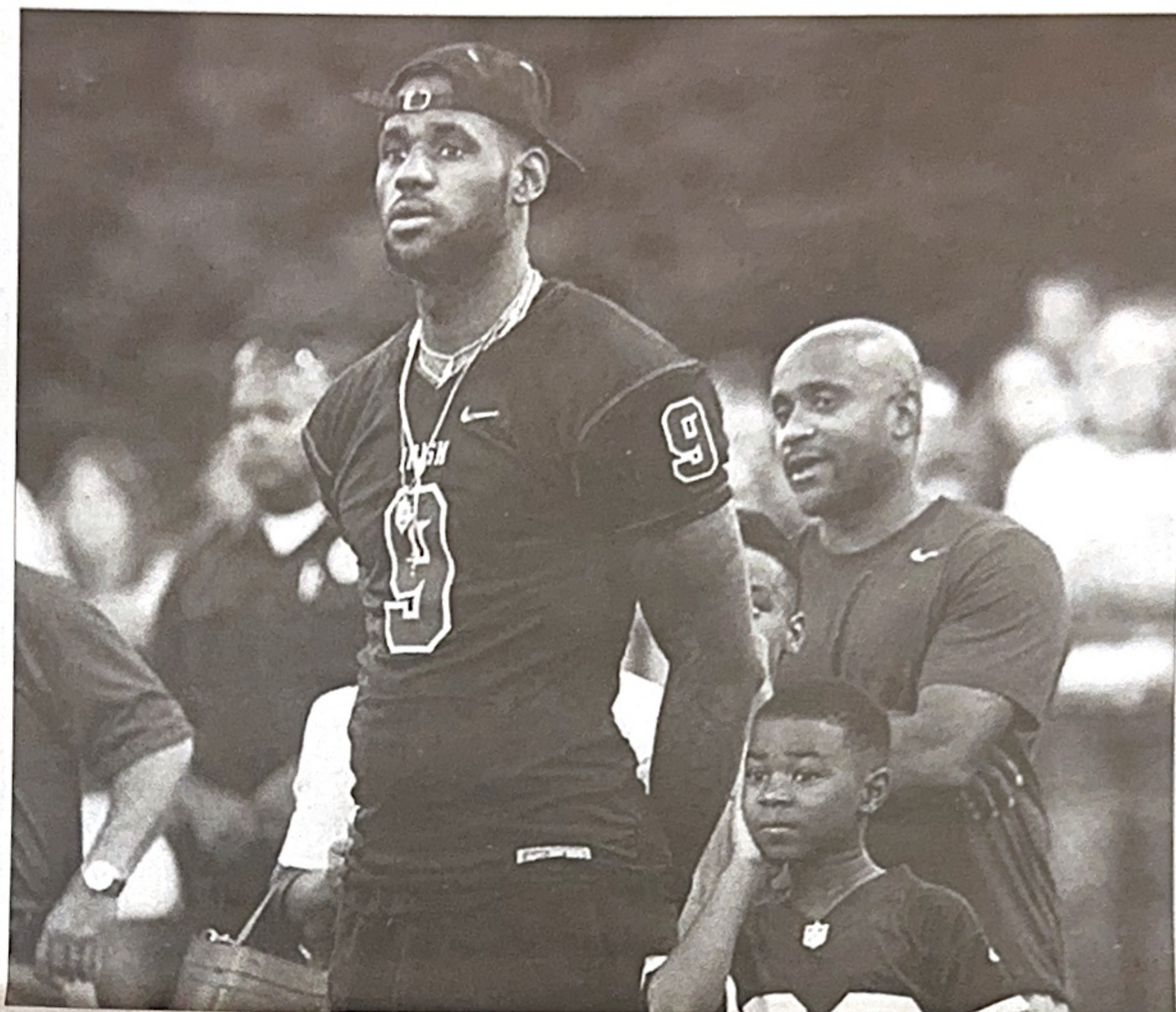
"He is one of my favorite people [and] he has taught me a lot to becoming the player I am today on and off the court."

"It has been a wonderful journey to play here at Shaker," said Ahmad. "I love playing for Shaker because of the endless amount of support and love the community has shown me and to the program."



# Injury Concerns Won't Unseat Football

Cleveland Cavaliers star LeBron James latest of prominent athletes to not let children play football, but sport will retain popularity, status as America's favorite



Cleveland Cavaliers star LeBron James watches a football game at his alma mater St. Vincent St. Mary High School, where he was an All-State wide receiver. James has stated that he will not let his children play football.

GUS CHAN/THE PLAIN DEALER

Lately, many star athletes are reluctant to let their children play football. One of these high profile parents is Cleveland Cavaliers star LeBron James.

James, who was an All-State wide receiver at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in Akron, told ESPN in a Nov. 13 interview that he did not let his kids play football due to health concerns related to the sport.

"We don't want them to play in our household right now until they understand how physical and how demanding the game is," James said.

James, who's first adolescent love was football, according to ESPN, believes his kids shouldn't be playing the violent sport because of their privileged background. James said one of the reasons he played football was because he needed a way out of the inner



Ned Weingart  
Raider Zone Editor

city. His kids can only play basketball, baseball and soccer.

James isn't the only high profile athlete to steer his children away from football. New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees and former St. Louis Rams quarterback Kurt Warner both voiced concerns about their children following in their footsteps.

Because of recent concussion and injury concerns, participation in Pop Warner football, the most prominent youth football organization in the country, has dropped by nearly 10 percent in the past three years. Even President Barack Obama has said if he had a son, he wouldn't let him play football.

So, with these growing concerns, is football on its way to extinction? No, and here's why.

Football is America's most popular sport. With more than 111 million viewers in 2014, the Super Bowl is the most viewed television event in the country. That's more than one third of the country. The ratings for the MLB World Series, NHL Stanley Cup and NBA Finals don't compare to Super Bowl numbers. In fact, the Super Bowl had more than double the viewers of all those games combined. Football won't die out as long as the NFL attracts a diverse viewership.

Football to Americans is like gladiator fighting to the Romans. It's part of what defines us as a nation. Yes, it is violent at times, but our nation has never been one to shy away from conflict. We have picked fights with most of the western world and won, most of the time. America is a tough, gritty, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps type of country, and football embodies that.

In football, physicality and hard work are everything. Tom Brady, considered one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time, was a low sixth-round pick. He was told he wouldn't make it in the NFL. Super Bowl-winning and future Hall of Fame quarterback Kurt Warner wasn't even drafted. He was bagging groceries before he finally got a chance in the NFL. America and football are one in the same, and the journey to NFL stardom parallels the American Dream. No matter where you start out, anyone can succeed with hard work and perseverance.

It's not just the NFL that people love, it's high school and college football, too. Programs at The Ohio State University, University of Michigan, University of Alabama and The University of Texas at Austin see sold-

**"We don't want them to play in our household right now until they understand how physical and how demanding the game is."**

**LEBRON JAMES**

out crowds of 100,000 fans or more. Those schools earn upwards of \$100 million from their football programs.

People in this country are obsessed with football. In the fall, Americans dedicate entire weekends to the game: high school on Friday, college on Saturday and the NFL on Sunday. Baseball may be America's pastime, but football is America's favorite sport.

Although football has injury concerns, it's not the only sport troubled by concussions. The NHL saw a 30 percent rise in concussions in 2013, whereas NFL concussions rates fell 23 percent. Concussions are also a concern in soccer, a sport where players use their heads to launch the ball down the field. Football's most common injury isn't even concussions, it's knee injuries.

Player safety in the NFL is treated very seriously. The league has called more penalties than they have in the past for hitting a defenseless player or a player unaware that a hit is coming. Penalties for roughing the quarterback have also increased recently. In 2009, the league had 69 roughing-the-passer penalties, compared to 100 in 2012 and 90 in 2013. The NFL has also moved kick-offs up the field from the 30-yard line to the 35-yard line to decrease the amount of kicks that players run back. This is because kick-offs, where players run full speed toward each other from more than 30 yards away, are widely considered to be the most dangerous part of football. America's love for football is unparalleled by any other sport. It is part of our culture and defines our mentality as a nation. That's why it receives such scrutiny: because we care. Americans can sleep soundly because football isn't going anywhere.



# Winter Sports Off to a Hot Start in December

With season ahead, Raider basketball, hockey and swimming look to build on recent success



WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

WILL MCKNIGHT STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore Adam Slovickovski hits a Rocky River player during the Raiders' home opener on Dec. 5th. The Raiders have gotten off to a 5-2 start.



WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE

Junior David Wright goes to the hoop for a layup during a Raider basketball practice. Shaker has started off 2-0 at the time of publication, including a big win over St. John's High School. Sophomore Lauren Reece practices during a recent Raider swimming practice. Women's swimming fell to Rocky River 111-69 Dec. 13, but beat Brush High School 131-38 Dec. 14.



WILL MCKNIGHT//THE SHAKERITE



# Between Distance and Time, Rowing a Modern-Day Odyssey

A look inside crew, one of Shaker's lesser known sports programs

NED WEINGART RAIDER ZONE EDITOR

Imagine if the football season ran from August to April, or if the hockey team didn't finish playing until the end of summer. That's life for Shaker Crew athletes. The team has competitive fall rowing, winter indoor rowing and conditioning and then a main season in the spring.

This year-round competition can take a toll on players.

"During the winter season is when I really start to feel it," said junior Will Landow. "Waking up every morning for 5 a.m. practices before school can be really brutal."

"In the winter sometimes I wish I played another sport because the workouts are tough," said Landow. "The problem is I can't skate, shoot a basketball or swim competitively, so rowing is the next best thing."

Shaker's crew program began in 1997 with a women's team, adding a men's team in 2012. Shaker is one of only three public schools in the state, besides Marietta and Upper Arlington High Schools, to offer crew as a varsity sport.

Shaker is a member of the Midwest Scholastic Rowing Association, which includes 55 schools in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Although crew is an unorthodox sport, it has a storied history in the United States.

"Crew is the oldest interscholastic sport,"

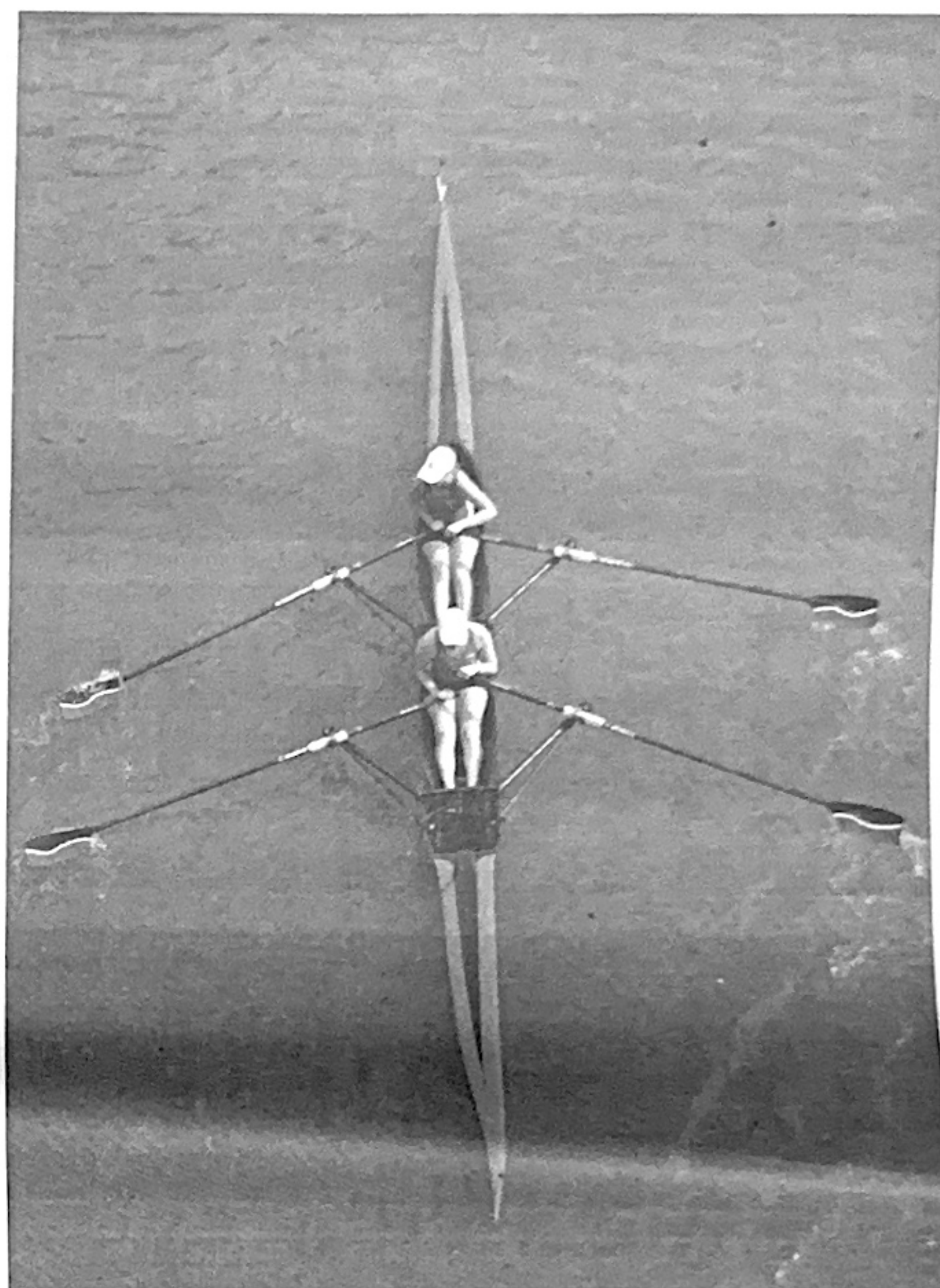
Shaker Head Coach Robert Valerian said. "The Yale-Harvard boat race started in 1859 and high schools have been racing since shortly after the Civil War."

Valerian, who is in his sixth year as Shaker's head coach, rowed crew for Division I Georgetown, where he and his teammates were two-time national champions. Valerian was also the head coach at St. Ignatius for 13 years before coming to Shaker.

The Raiders row out of the Cleveland Rowing Foundation at Rivergate Park on the Cuyahoga River. Shaker shares the boathouse with other local high schools, including St. Ignatius, St. Edward High School and St. Joseph Academy. Colleges that share the boathouse include Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University and John Carroll University.

The Cleveland Youth Rowing Association also rows there. The commute to practice includes a half-hour bus ride that usually departs from the school at 4 p.m., sharp. The team usually returns from practice around 7:15 p.m.

"The drive to practice really doesn't seem too far, or at least I'm used to it now," said Landow. "I like traveling down with my teammates to the boathouse for practice anyway. We're so close that it's almost like a cult thing."



BEN SCHELLING/THE SHAKERITE

Seniors Katie Richardson and Noa Katz row on the Cuyahoga River Sept. 20, 2014.

**"I like traveling down with my teammates to the boathouse for practice anyway. We're so close that it's almost like a cult thing."**

**WILL LANDOW**

Junior Megan Hofstetter agreed that the ride to practice is good for morale.

"Although it takes a half hour each way, it creates a time for our team to bond," she said. "It overall creates a better atmosphere throughout the team."

Junior captain Xavier Aniton agreed that the half-hour bus ride to practice isn't as bad as it seems.

"Traveling far for practice on a daily basis helps the team chemistry," said Aniton. "It brings us together and helps us unwind before practice."

Hofstetter believes the unique and unorthodox characteristics of rowing are what make it great.

"Crew gives us great outlook of the city because we go downtown and row on the Cuyahoga River everyday in the spring and fall, while other sports play on the same field every day, seeing the same things," said Hofstetter. "With our time on the Cuyahoga River, and occasionally Lake Erie, we get to see different views of city."

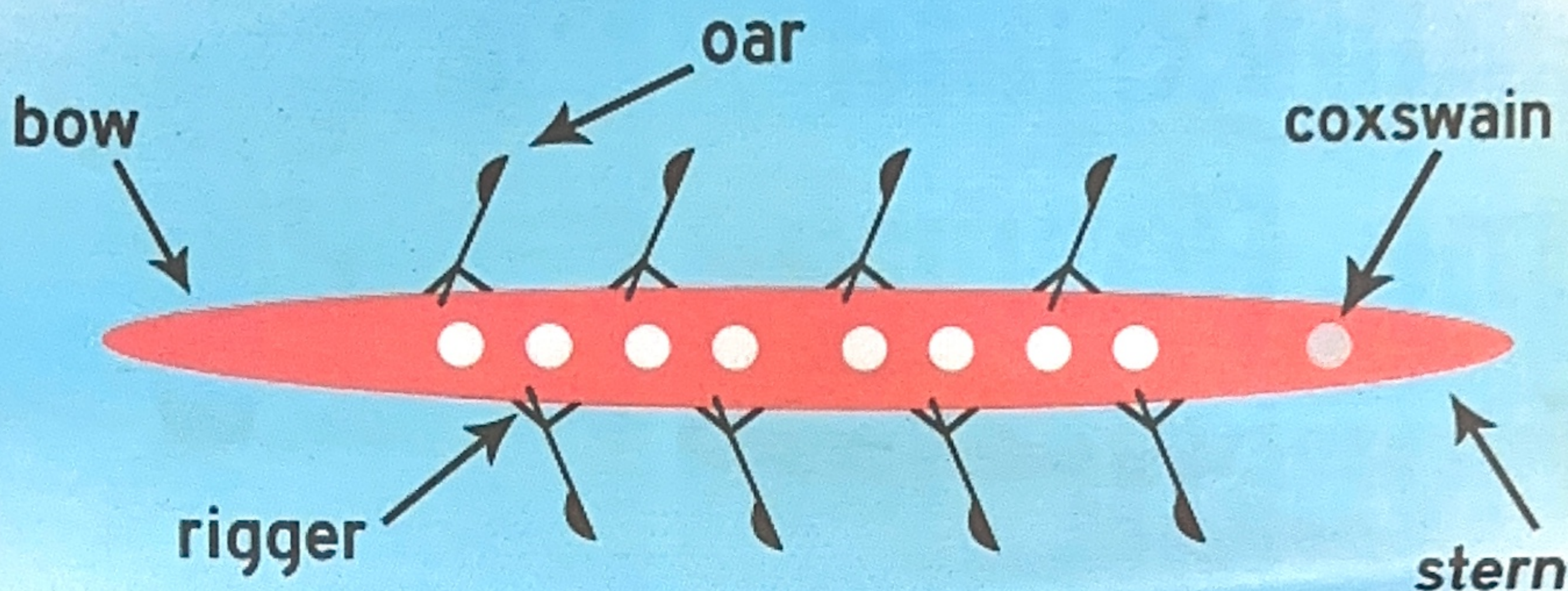
"We also get to see other cities and states during our regattas," Hofstetter said.

Hofstetter believes staying on top of this busy schedule is very important.

"Since traveling takes up a lot of time and we want to practice for a decent amount of time, we don't get back to the school until



# Inside an 8-Person Boat



- Each boat has eight rowers and one coxswain.
- Each rower has one oar.
- To row, rowers push off with their feet and use their oars in a rolling motion.
- The coxswain steers and coordinates the rowers' rhythm.

ELLIOT SRIKANTIA/THE SHAKERITE

around 7:15," said Hofstetter. "It really demands us to have good time management."

Valerian agreed. "It's a full schedule, but the rowers enjoy the experience. Most of the kids read or study during the bus travel and between races," he said.

The men's team has 5 a.m. practices in the winter before school, which feature weight lifting, running and rowing indoors on a machine called an erg that simulates rowing.

The women's team also has morning practices two or three days a week during the winter, as well as after-school practices on other days.

Hofstetter said winter conditioning is very different from the main spring season.

"Winter conditioning and erging are a lot more independent, while rowing on the water there are either four or eight girls working together," said Hofstetter. "Winter training is more about gaining muscle and power. While rowing on the water is more about technique and specific boat times."

Most Shaker rowers come to the high school with little experience, but Valerian thinks this is one characteristic that makes the sport special.

"What I love about coaching this sport is that every high school rower starts at 'ground zero' in August of their ninth-grade year. Most of them have never even seen a racing shell before," said Valerian. "We have about five weeks to

**"It's a full schedule, but rowers enjoy the experience."**

**ROBERT VALERIAN**

teach them to row before their first race. It's very satisfying to see them progress over a short time from the rawest of novices to competing on a very high level by the end of freshman year."

Shaker crew follows a rigorous travel schedule, traveling hours away and even out of state for regattas, or races featuring teams from many schools.

"We have regattas in the Columbus area mostly. In the past we have also had some in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and even in Michigan," said Landow. "If we make it to nationals in the spring, we get to travel to New Jersey."

"Next fall we hope to attend the Head of the Charles regatta in Cambridge, [Massachusetts], which is one of the most famous regattas in the country," Landow said. This would be the Raiders' first time ever attending the prestigious race.

The hard work the Raiders put in doesn't go unnoticed.

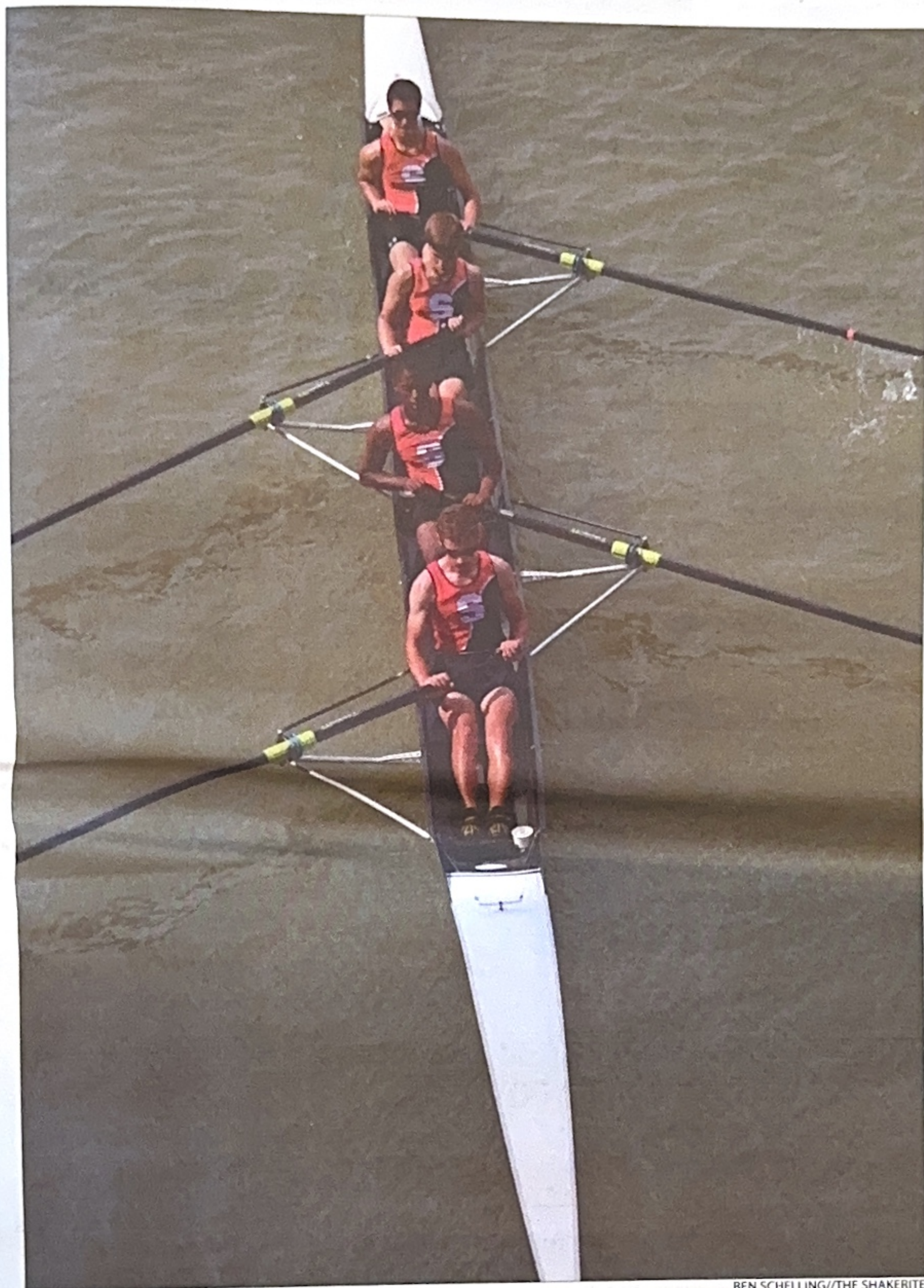
"The Shaker rowers are an extremely disciplined group of athletes. They work hard at both their sport and their studies," said



BEN SCHELLING/THE SHAKERITE

**Sophomore Jacquie Berkson** carries the rowing shell to the dock at the Head of the Cuyahoga Regatta Sept. 20, 2014.





BEN SCHELLING/THE SHAKERITE



BEN SCHELLING/THE SHAKERITE

**Juniors Peter Zagara,** Will Landow, Xavier Aniton and Ian Morison row in the Head of the Cuyahoga Regatta Sept. 20, 2014. Sophomore Max Rotatori helped carry rowing shells at that regatta, where he competed in a boat with junior Brandon Augustine, sophomore Jacque Berkson and senior Ian Canfield.



BEN SCHELLING/THE SHAKERITE

Valerian. "They know that if they want to succeed at both they have time only to eat, sleep, study and row. Most of them stick to that regimen year around. They sacrifice for their success."

The Raiders have had success in the past and Valerian believes that it will continue.

"Our women's junior 4 boat, which features juniors Marisa Hofstetter, Megan Hofstetter, Lily Schulte-Lawrence and Emily Wolman, won all three races it was entered in this fall," said Valerian. "This boat will be a contender to win a Midwest Championship this spring."

"We will also have an excellent men's junior 4 boat," said Valerian. "It features juniors Peter Zagara, Will Landow, Xavier Aniton and Ian Morrison, who all performed well this fall."

Valerian emphasized the team dynamic that dominates crew.

"I love this sport because there are no

### By The Numbers

**Sprints: 2 kilometers long**

**Long distance: 5-6 kilometers long**

**Average time on sprints: Around 6-8 minutes**

**Average time on long distance: 16-20 minutes**

**Average strokes per minute: 30-32**

**Average strokes per sprint: 180-200**

**Average strokes per long distance: 540-560**

superstars. Everybody has to work and train together to a common level of fitness," said Valerian. "You don't have to be able to bench press 300 pounds or run a 10 flat 100 meters."

"What you do have to do is work hard, train hard and have a high tolerance for pain, because every rower in the boat is in pain during the last 200 meters of a race. It is the ultimate team sport," Valerian said.

Despite the team's demanding practice schedule, Landow believes his teammates make the experience worthwhile.

"The people are what make crew so great," said Landow. "Rowing in the boat with the same few guys everyday really helps you develop a teamwork and a chemistry that you can't find in any other sport."

Aniton agreed. "Sometimes our practices can get pretty tough," he said. "Rowing is a lot like the Mafia --just when I thought I've had enough it pulls me right back in."



## You Can't Just Forget Flex Night

ABBY WHITE

Here's the thing about Flex Night: it's a good idea. One of the better ones this school has had, actually. It's a necessary measure to prevent us overworked high school students from crashing and burning under the weight of all our work.

So I ask you, teachers: why do you pretend it doesn't exist? Why do you assign homework on those forbidden days? Perhaps more to the point, why do teachers in *other* classes assign more homework on other subjects' Flex Nights? We don't have Flex Nights just so they can sit on the wayside, ignored by the people who must implement them. Nor do we have Flex Nights so other teachers can take advantage of them and assign even more homework. That eliminates the point of Flex Nights: to give students a much-needed break.

We're not asking for a week off -- sure, that would be nice, but it's not feasible. I understand that teachers are overworked, too, with deadlines that are becoming increasingly harder to meet thanks to our influx of testing. But don't punish students' sanity for something that isn't their fault. All we're asking for is one night a week where we can take a breath and relax.

## Raider Rant

## The "Meh" List of a First-Semester Senior

Marcia Brown

1. Class
2. Homework
3. Tests
4. Group Projects
5. Powerpoints
6. **School**

Want to read more stories that make you so chipper you think school is almost over? Visit [www.shakerite.com](http://www.shakerite.com)

## Microfeature

NATALIA PERKINS



Robert White

After teaching for 36 years in the Shaker School District, Robert White is retiring. He has taken a lighthearted approach to teaching Latin, Greek and math at Woodbury, the middle school and the high school to keep students interested in these subjects.

"One of the things about being a Latin teacher is that you have two jobs," said White. "The first job is being a

Latin teacher, and the second is making sure that you have enough kids to be a Latin teacher."

In addition to teaching, White has advised Speech and Debate, Academic Challenge, Latin Club and Math Club. He also appeared on the TV show "Jeopardy!" in 1987 and occasionally shows the recording to his students.

As an involved Classics teacher, he won the 2014 Ovations Award from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. CAMWS awards members for their exemplary service to the organization and the Classics profession, according to their website.

"I haven't really gotten many prizes, but I got Mrs. White," he said. He met his wife, Lori, when he directed a play at Woodbury, for which she designed costumes. They now both teach at the high school, he Latin and she math. Next year is their 30th anniversary.

## Heard in the Halls

"That's the one good thing about having a sibling: you can bribe them."

December 2, 11:22 a.m.

"Do you know where Washington State is? It's all the way on the other side of the West Coast on the United States Continent!"

December 3, 11:03 a.m.

## 10 Things Faster Than The Newsroom's Internet

1. People in the hallway
2. The clock during 10th period
3. ASPIRE testing
4. Ms. Sekicky's root canal
5. The "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, extended edition
6. A stroll along the Great Wall of China
7. Driver's ed
8. Legalizing gay marriage in Ohio
9. Waiting for a microwave during 6th period
10. ... loading.

## The New York Times Has Never Been to Ohio



ELLA SHLONSKY

In a Thanksgiving feature, The New York Times claimed Ohio's typical holiday food is English pea and onion salad. Really? I've never tried this dish, and no one I know has either. Nor do we plan to.

## This Should Be a Word

**Stairhead** (n): a person who goes up and down the wrong stairs

**Beyonspiration** (n): the feeling one gets after Beyoncé does something monumental -- dropping a self-titled album out of nowhere, receiving the most Grammy nominations of any woman, breathing...

## 3-Second Movie Reviews

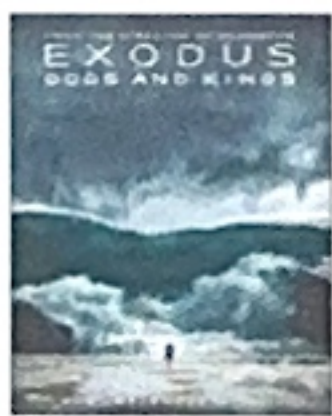
ABBY WHITE



Decent -- so better than its title



A Chris Rock movie finally succeeds



Sadly, not "The Prince of Egypt"



## A Healthy Holiday Treat

ELLA SHLONSKY

While preparing for the holidays, mix up your food repertoire. My new favorite dish is vegan mock chopped liver. It looks and tastes like liver, but is actually mushrooms, walnuts and hard boiled eggs.

## Mark Johnson's Best Tweets

In the Twittiverse, WKYC's weatherman took his job to the next level

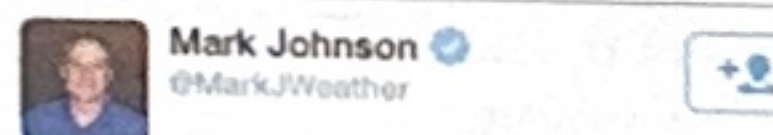
**Auxiliary cords** are used to play music from electronic devices. According to KnowYourMeme.com, the expression "hand over the aux cord" is most often tweeted to caption pictures of flaming cars. Somehow, we think Johnson got a bit confused.



Time for Mother Nature to HAND BACK the aux cord!

11/16/14, 9:16 PM

467 RETWEETS 719 FAVORITES



I eat my dinner in the bathtub, then I go to sick clubs...

11/14/14, 11:31 PM

70 RETWEETS 162 FAVORITES

Quoting song lyrics is commonplace on Twitter. However, when that song is Tove Lo's revealing "Habits," some caution might be necessary. No word yet on whether Johnson typed "sick" instead of the actual lyric, "sex," on purpose.